MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

JANUARY 2016 / #392 / $4.99

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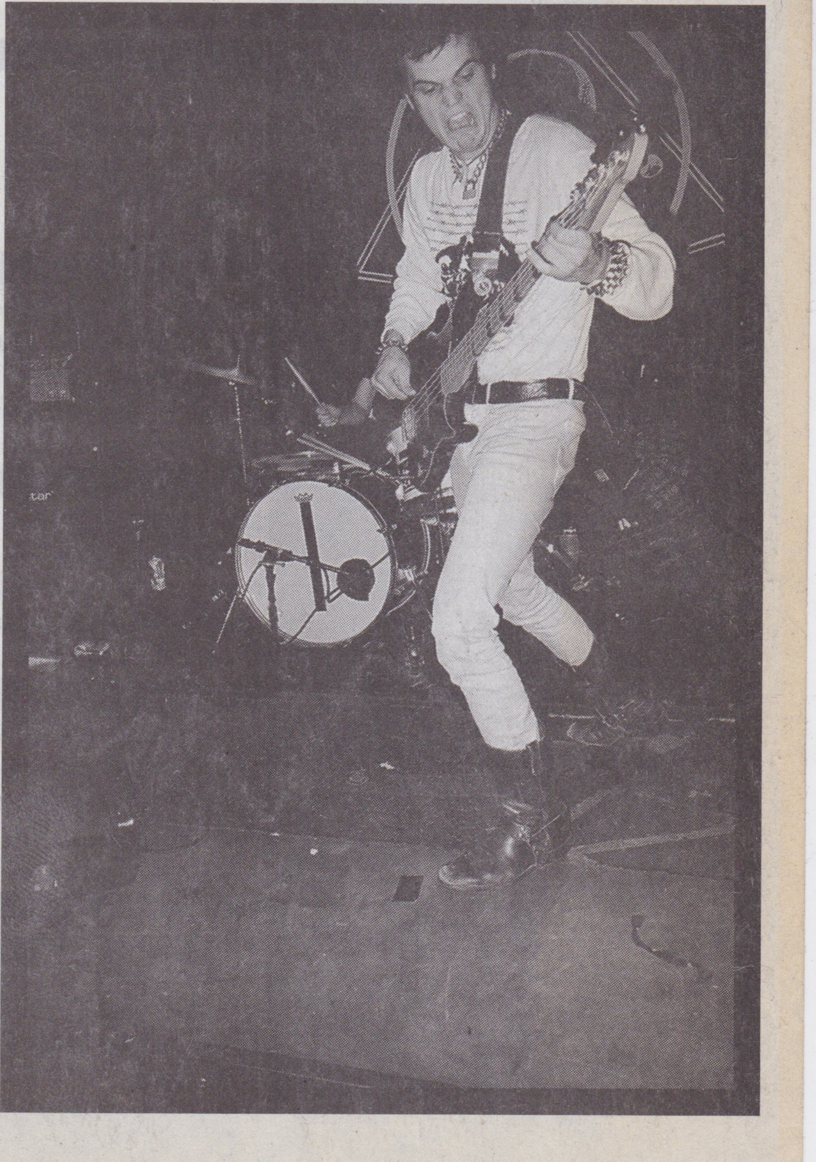

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For what it's worth, here're some of the MRR reviewers' current Top 10 (or so) things we've reviewed this month.

TOP 10

GRACE AMBROSE

- THE #1s – live
- UNA BÈSTIA / BLAZING EYE / SEMI – live
- LOVE TRIANGLE / EFIALTIS / SANG – live
- PIÑÉN – Emancipación EP / PATSY – "Tuley Tude High" 45
- ORDEN MUNDIAL – EP + live / SNEAKS – Gymnastics LP
- FRAU – Mira EP / VIAL – You're Not Safe EP
- SPERMA – Züri Punx EP / YOUTH BRIGADE – EP
- V/A – Ork Records 4xLP / SCIENTISTS – both LPs
- SUBURBAN HOMES – "Conformity in the UK" 45
- THE WORLD – live / BLACK ABBA – demo + 45

LYDIA ATHANASOPOULOU

- DIÄT – Positive Energy LP
- ORDEN MUNDIAL – El Nuevo Sonido Balear EP
- SUBURBAN HOMES – "Conformity in the UK" 45
- PIÑÉN – Emancipación EP
- V/A – La Force Dans la Oi! Vol. 2 EP
- TRAU – Doblers EP / FRAU – Mira EP
- SPERMA – Züri Punx EP
- DRONEZ – Corporate Funded Terror EP
- BLACK ABBA – 45 / OUTREAU – Double Hate EP
- LONGINGS – LP / STATIONS – Work EP

MATT BADENHOP

- V/A – La Force Dans la Oi! Vol. 2 EP
- PIÑÉN – Emancipación EP
- SPERMA – Züri Punx EP
- V/A – Vägra Raggarna Benzin 2xLP
- SPERMA – Züri Punx EP
- NECROPHILIA – Mentalna Pustinja LP
- FRAU – Mira EP
- ABSOLUT / PARANOID – split LP
- TRAU – Doblers EP / BROKEN WINDOWS – demo
- DIÄT – Positive Energy LP

WILL BLOMQUIST

- STATIONS – Work EP
- V/A – YPJ–Support LP
- DIÄT – Positive Energy LP
- LONGINGS – LP
- PIÑÉN – Emancipación EP
- SPERMA – Züri Punx EP / TRAU – Doblers EP
- SPECTRES / SPACE DUST – live
- ROHIT / ALETHEIA – live
- SBSM / VEXED – live
- NÜ–KLE–AR BLAST SUNTAN – live

MITCH CARDWELL

- FRANTIC STUFFS – Last Wave LP
- BLACK ABBA – "Betting on Death/Civilized"
- CUNTZ – Force the Zone LP
- PREDATOR – "Drag/First to Know"
- SUBURBAN HOMES – "Conformity in the UK" 45
- FRAU – Mira EP / VIAL – You're Not Safe EP
- BLACK PANTIES – both 7"s
- PATSY – 45 / RIK & THE PIGS – 45
- EXHAUSTION – Phased Out EP / AFAX – 11 11 EP
- Scientists – Both LPs / V/A – Ork Records 4xLP

ROBERT COLLINS

- SMASH YOUR FACE – live
- CINDERBLOCK – demo
- PURE SHIT – EP / BABY SHAKES – Starry Eyes LP
- LONGINGS – LP / SMOKERS – live and demo
- TRAU – Doblers EP / ODD MAN OUT – Sold Out EP
- ABSOLUT / PARANOID – split LP
- TECHIE BLOOD – live / CHEAP WIG – demo
- ORDEN MUNDIAL – El Nuevo Sonido Balear EP
- DEAD MILKMEN / FLAG OF DEMOCRACY – split EP
- PYRE – demo

LAYLA GIBBON

- PATSY – "Tuley Tude High/Paradise"
- SNEAKS – Gymnastics LP
- VIAL – You're Not Safe EP / FRAU – Mira EP
- PIÑÉN – Emancipación EP
- BLACK ABBA – "Betting on Death/Civilized"
- SPERMA – Züri Punx EP / YOUTH BRIGADE – EP
- V/A – Ork Records 4xLP
- ORDEN MUNDIAL – El Nuevo Sonido Balear EP
- NITE SCHOOL – EP / BABY SHAKES – Starry Eyes LP
- TANG SOLEIL – LP/ LE CHEMIN DE LA HONTE – LP

DAN GOETZ

- PATSY – "Tuley Tude High/Paradise"
- LONGINGS – LP
- SPECTRES – live
- ORDEN MUNDIAL – El Nuevo Sonido Balear EP
- FRAU – Mira EP
- PIÑÉN – Emancipación EP
- VIAL – You're Not Safe EP
- SUBURBAN HOMES – "Conformity in the UK"
- BLACK ABBA – "Betting on Death/Civilized"
- V/A – Vägra Raggarna Benzin 2xLP

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TOP 10

Please send two copies of vinyl, CD-only, or demo releases to the address on the previous page

GREG HARVESTER

RATS REST – demo
SUBURBAN HOMES – "Conformity in the UK" 45
BLACK ABBA – demo
FRAU – Mira EP
VIAL – You're Not Safe EP
PATSY – "Tuley Tude High/Paradise"
ORDEN MUNDIAL – El Nuevo Sonido Balear EP
SICK THOUGHTS – "Aborted World/G.O.O.M.F."
DEAD MILKMEN / FLAG OF DEMOCRACY – split EP
THE WORLD – live

KENNY KAOS

BABY SHAKES – Starry Eyes LP
THE HUSSY – Appleseeds EP
JACQUES LE COQUE – "Tip of My Tongue" 45
JULIETTE SEIZURE & THE TREMOR–DOLLS – EP
DIRTY FEW / ROOTBEER AND MERMENTAU – split EP
YOUTH BRIGADE – "First Demo, Summer 1981" EP
WIMPS – Suitcase LP
DEAD MILKMEN / FLAG OF DEMOCRACY – split EP
F – Attack EP
MANIAC – "Chola Queen/Calamine"

CAROLYN KEDDY

NEEDLE EXCHANGE / SCRAPS – split EP
CHARLES DE GOAL – "ZigZag/Damaged Goods"
BLACK ABBA – "Betting on Death/Civilized"
FRAU – Mira EP
NITE SCHOOL – Pleaser EP
SUBURBAN HOMES – 45 / PATSY – 45
LE CHEMIN DE LA HONTE – LP
CUNTZ – Force the Zone LP
CHUMPS – Gimme Headache LP
V/A – Ork Records 4xLP set

RAY LUJAN

BABY SHAKES – Starry Eyes LP
D.O.A. – Hard Rain Falling LP
EVERYDAY THINGS – All Day//All Night EP
JULIETTE SEIZURE & THE TREMOR–DOLLS – EP
STAY CLEAN JOLENE – CD
SUBURBAN HOMES – "Conformity in the UK" 45
SURVEILLANCE – Man EP
SWEET TALK – Double Perfect LP
BEACH SLANG – live
REDD KROSS – live

ROTTEN RON READY

PIÑÉN – Emancipación EP
RIK & THE PIGS – "Pig Sweat/Feed the Animal"
BLACK PANTIES – "Prophet of Hate/Violence"
PATSY – "Tuley Tude High/Paradise"
FRAU – Mira EP
SICK THOUGHTS – "Aborted World/G.O.O.M.F."
DRONEZ – Corporate Funded Terror EP
CUNTZ – Force the Zone LP
FLQ – "More of You" EP
FLIPPER – live at Joshua Tree

FRED SCHRUNK

FRAU – Mira EP
SNEAKS – Gymnastics LP
SPERMA – Züri Punx EP
ORDEN MUNDIAL – El Nuevo Sonido Balear EP
SURVEILLANCE – Man EP
PREDATOR – "Drag/First to Know"
PATSY – "Tuley Tude High/Paradise"
YOUR PEST BAND – Never Fall You Again EP
V/A – Vägra Raggarna Benzin 2xLP
LONGINGS – LP

LENA TAHMASSIAN

PIÑÉN – Emancipación EP
V/A – Vägra Raggarna Benzin 2xLP
LENTIC WATERS – The Path LP
DIÄT – Positive Energy LP
SUBURBAN HOMES – "Conformity in the UK" 45
VIAL – You're Not Safe EP
PATSY – "Tuley Tude High/Paradise"
SPECTRES – live
KORROSIVE – live
STRANGE FACES – live

ELI WALD

SNEAKS – Gymnastics LP
PIÑÉN – Emancipación EP
VIAL – You're Not Safe EP
ORDEN MUNDIAL – El Nuevo Sonido Balear EP
FRAU – Mira EP
MONGOLOID / NASTI / CRAZY BUGS – live
PATSY – 45 / RIK & THE PIGS – 45
V/A – Ork Records 4xLP
GRUMP – Flatline EP
TANG SOLEIL – LP

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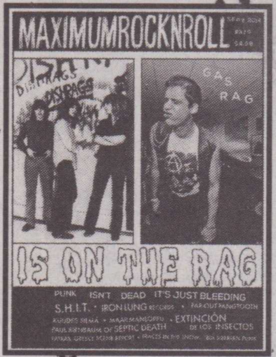
LIKE WHAT YOU'RE READING IN *MRR* #392? RECOMMENDED READING FROM THE MRRchive:

MAXIMUM ROCK'N'ROLL
#358
Brontez Purnell
Potty Mouth
2012 YEAR END TOP 10

MRR #358/Mar '13

Features a report on the East Anglia scene that brought us VOLUNTEERS. Also: 2012 year-end top-tens, Brontez Purnell of the Bay Area's YOUNGER LOVERS, POTTY MOUTH from Northampton, MA, Sweden's NITAD, SCHIZOPHAZIA from Canada, and Shitworker of the Month: Mark Dober. Cover art by Ermis Atzemoglou.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DISHRAGS
GAS RAG
IS ON THE RAG
PUNK ISN'T DEAD IT'S JUST BLEEDING
S.H.I.T. • IRON LUNG RECORDS • FAR-OUT FANGTOOTH
EXTINCIÓN DE LOS INSECTOS
PAUL BIRNBAUM OF SEPTIC DEATH

MRR #376/Sep '14

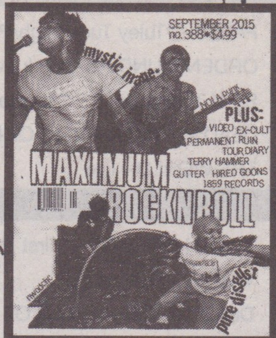
Includes S.H.I.T. from Toronto and the beginning of the S.H.I.B.G.B.'S story as well as '77-era Canadian punks the DISHRAGS, Chicago's GAS RAG, Iron Lung Records, Philly's FAR-OUT FANGTOOTH, EXTINCIÓN DE LOS INSECTOS from Madrid, '80s Siberian punk doc Traces in the Snow, Paul Birnbaum of SEPTIC DEATH, Finland's KUUDES SILMÄ and MAAILMANLOPPU, and a scene report from Patras, Greece.

MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL
G.L.O.S.S. (They're From The Future)
VIOLENCE CREEPS
BLACK & BROWN Chicago Collective of Punks of Color
IS THIS VENUE ACCESSIBLE?
IT'S GONNA BLOW San Diego Punk Doc
SMZB
FAT CREEPS
VIVISEKTIO
TRANCE

MRR #384/May '15

Our interview with Olympia's G.L.O.S.S., whose US tour diary appears in the issue you're holding in your hands today, not to mention Bay Area powerhouse VIOLENCE CREEPS, Spain's TRANCE, SMZB from China, FAT CREEPS, Chicago's Black and Brown Punk Shows, the Is This Venue Accessible? website, San Diego punk doc It's Gonna Blow, and Finland's VIVISEKTIO.

RECENT BACK ISSUES: MRR's Latest and Greatest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mystic inane
PLUS: VIDEO EX-CULT PERMANENT RUIN TOUR DIARY TERRY HAMMER GUTTER HIRED GOONS 1859 RECORDS
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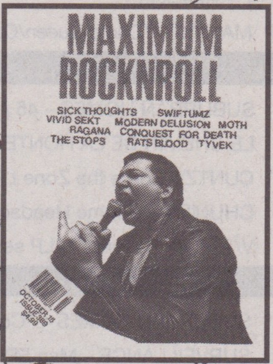
pure disgust

MRR #388/Sep '15

MYSTIC INANE from New Orleans, Texas's VIDEO, Memphis's EX-CULT, DC's PURE DISGUST, Toxic Reasons' manager and first wave SF punker TERRY HAMMER, HIRED GOONS from Canada, Greece's GUTTER, 1859 RECORDS, and a PERMANENT RUIN euro tour diary.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SICK THOUGHTS SWIFTUMZ VIVID SEKT MODERN DELUSION MOTH RAGANA CONQUEST FOR DEATH THE STOPS RATS BLOOD TYVEK

MRR #389/Oct '15

Baltimore's teen hatethrob SICK THOUGHTS, an East Asian tour diary from CONQUEST FOR DEATH, Portland's VIVID SEKT and the STOPS, the Bay Area's own SWIFTUMZ, RATS BLOOD from Ireland, Danish dark punks MOTH, Croatia's MODERN DELUSION, and Oakland's RAGANA.

MaXimum Rocknroll
MERCENÁRIAS • SBSM OBNOX • NOT DEAD YET EMASCULATOR • STRANGLED POPULATION • PARASITES DO YA HEAR WE?

MRR #390/Nov '15

AS MERCENÁRIAS from Brazil, Toronto's Not Dead Yet festival, OBNOX out of Ohio, SBSM from Oakland, Edmonton's STRANGLED, Chicago's own POPULATION, PDX rockers EMASCULATOR, Chatanooga's Do Ya Hear We? fest, NJ/Bay Area pop-punkers PARASITES, plus photos from the opening of DIY Space for London and Springfield, IL's Dumb Fest 3D.

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LETTERS

Send letters to MRR, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146-0760,
or to mrr@maximumrocknroll.com. No response guaranteed.

Dear *MRR* readers,

Vanessa X wrote a review in *MRR* #390 about Marco Thiede´s book *Human Punk For Real*. I “just” want to add some background information on this book, but I'm *not* blaming Vanessa X for anything she wrote in her review.

Marco Thiede from Bremen in Northern Germany never played in any band nor did a fanzine, but here in Germany he's far from being an “unknown” punk. He's one of the Punks from Bremen, which always had an infamous reputation among us punks in Germany. “Bremen Punks” always stood for Anti-Fascist Punks, as they founded the “Anti Skinhead League” (ASL) in the early '80s. They kept punk shows free of Nazi Skins in Bremen, but also in numerous other towns around Bremen. They often rented some buses and whole groups of Bremen Punks showed up at shows all over Northern Germany and sometimes even in Denmark, Holland, and the UK. They truly behaved and acted like punks, so you either were with them or you hated them. Once you made friends with them you always had a large “family” of people you could relate to or trust in. Studs and spikes and a whole lot of beer—that's one of the first images we had and still have while thinking of Punks from Bremen. Most of the punks turned their back on the UK82 type of Punk during the mid '80s and chose to follow the more Americanized way of hardcore punk, but not the punks in Bremen! They continued their own style. The ASL especially left a strong impression on the whole punk scene, as they fought many fights against the boneheads and showed and encouraged punks in other towns to fight back as well.

On one of the last pages of Marco's book you'll find a list of whom I thought at first it might be a list of thank yous but nope…it's a list of 64 persons out of the Bremen-Punk scene, who are already dead (“unnatural” types of death). Therefore the book by Marco Thiede has been a first insight into the scene of Bremen punks, which of course might leave a sour taste due to all the violence being reported. Marco's one of the surviving people from the scene, which is still very active. There are still loads of punks in that town, loads of shows are happening and you often meet these people all over Europe. There also exists a group called B.O.B., which refers to the friendship of band members and numerous single persons from “Bath, Oakland & Bremen.” They have had annual festivals in the UK, USA and Germany. One of these friendships led to a marriage; that's how Marco moved to Oakland in 2012. I'm happy to call Marco a friend of mine. We´ll meet next year in Bremen and Blackpool for some shows for sure!

— Helge
PLASTIC BOMB fanzine

* * *

Holy Crap !

I can t believe that *MRR* has such narrow minded people in their team! Has Vanessa X really ANY clue about Punk Rock??

How about trying to think how different scenes are working..I totally get it if people like my book or not, that s the way it goes with every book and I respect that! I cant believe that she s complaining about the terrible writing with other words she s fucking up with my friend BiLL Collins who s a fucking legend in the Bay Area and an awesome writer aswell !han she is complaining about mistakes !! That s where I was laughiy ass off!! It s a Punk Book !! I don t give a Fuck about fuckin mistakes ! I m fuckin german and I don t give a shit ! Than for whatever reason she criticized me,having a wife which is a half of my age !

how does she now ?? I never mentioned her age and btw she is 37 and not 25 !! Then she s complaining about my other wifes (I was married two times before) If she would have read my book,she would know ! And btw,some are just private and don t need to be part of the book !

But her hate list is endless..than she s giving me shit for wearing a T shirt form Hard Skin : Spend all day in the fuckin Pub ! Really ?? She should stop listening to Link in Park ! This shows me that she clearly has no fuckin clue about Punk Rock that those people are able to write their PC Hate visoins *MRR*...

what her fucking problem is,to attack me personally ! But that shows me again,that PC Nazis are the same stupid idiots,like religious bastards !

To bad after all these years,Maximum Rock n Roll lost all my respect !

FOAD !

– Marco

Dear Marco,

Thanks for the letter. I honestly enjoyed parts of your book and found the story of how you got involved in the Bremen punk scene to be really exciting, however I couldn't read most of it because of the way the book was formatted and the insane amount of grammar mistakes. Like I said in my review, the people who published your book (Regent Press) should be ashamed to be putting out people's stories without editing them. I would expect these types of mistakes in a zine, but not a real life book.

I'm also sick of the narrative in the punk scene that we have to get loaded and piss drunk to have a good time, which you talk about a lot re: your Hard Skin shirt. After years of partying and attending punk shows, I'm finding it hard not to drink and smoke when everyone around me is doing it and unfortunately the only thing that has worked for me is to stop attending so many shows, which sucks.

As for all of your marriages, you do you. I hope if you release another book, you find a great copy editor and please stay punk.

Laughiy my ass off/crawling in my skin,

Vanessa X

* * *

A couple of months ago, I reviewed the killer STRESS SS EP, and incorrectly stated that Poffen from TOTALITÄR handles vocals. Several people pointed out that in fact Jonas from HERATYS and INFERNÖH handles everything on this record. Apologies for the misinformation, but definitely still go out and pick this ripper up!

— Dan Goetz

We try and be as accurate as possible with our reviews (we do fact check!) but sometimes things slip through the cracks cause, let's face it, information certain records can be pretty scarce! This record rules. Jonas, put together a full band and come play in San Francisco—we'll make it up to you!

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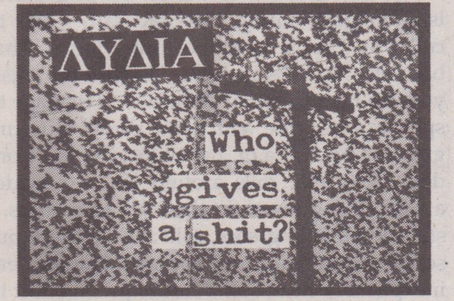


Punk is Love: Recollections from Not Dead Yet 2015, Toronto

The caffeine starts to kick in at about 6:00 a.m., as I am looking at my BART pass wondering why the heck it won't work. "It's got like $10 on it, can't I go through?" The guy gives me some response that's way too complex and detailed for so early in the morning. "You can get a single at the machine." Fuckin 'ell, I've got a flight to catch ya know. Handwritten sign taped to machine reads CASH ONLY. Well what if I haven't got any cash?! Canada has its own dollar! Eye roll. "Here," the guy takes my ticket, trashes it and lets me through. I thank him for begrudgingly accommodating me and run through, plane ticket in hand. Oof. Enter airport, locate check-in desk. "*Two-hour* delay? What the hell?!" Deep breaths. More coffee. Chain smoking. Freaking out but glad I find that old joint in my winter coat pocket *before* going through security. Finally—boarding. Knotted stomach, all wound up, stuck between two large guys; coding and crossword puzzles. Turbulence outside the plane and inside my brain. I bet I snored.

"Welcome to Philadelphia, local time is just after 5:00 p.m. We hope you enjoyed flying with us." Uh…no! Run out, locate next gate, then closest smoking area. "Yes miss, you'd have to go out and then come through security again." Bollocks! OK then, something to eat. Bored clerk, big sign: CASH ONLY. OK, bank. "We're sorry, this option is not available at this time." For fuck's sake. Phone is almost dead, probably won't work in Canada anyway. Better that way. Social media detox. Live in the moment. I charge it anyway, sprawled out on the floor, frazzled and smelly, my *All Coppers Are Cunts* shirt getting funny looks.

It's 5:45 p.m. Boarding time says 5:45 p.m. Two flight attendants sitting near me at the gate scroll through their phones looking bored. "Um, pardon me but, how are we supposed to be leaving at 5:45 when we're all still out here?" Without looking up from her phone—very flatly—one of them responds. "That's a suggested time." Silence. Then "Oh did I say that out loud?" followed by magpie cackles from both of them. My eyeballs bulge and I don't know how to respond other than to hang my head in defeat. 6:00 p.m. and finally the heavy aircraft door closes. The plane is tiny, with like 50 seats and one flight attendant who looks like Kirsten Dunst circa *Virgin Suicides*. It's unnerving. I'm in a window seat. We're immobile. I'm evidently agitated. By 6:10, we're still not moving. 6:20, nothing. I fumble through the in-flight magazine for drink options. The golden ticket.

6:30, finally from the cockpit "Well, the runway is clogged up and we haven't been given a queue number yet but hopefully within fifteen minutes we'll be getting in line." The first band has probably already started. I mumble under my breath like Daffy Duck. At long last, at 6:50 the view outside my window starts to change. "Excuse me, do you serve alcohol on this flight?" "Oh, no. We don't." [smile] "It's regulation for such a short flight to not offer alcoholic beverages to our passengers." [big smile] "Gotcha, thanks!" I look away in despair and sink further into my seat, half-laughing half-whimpering. The person in front of me briskly turns around giving me a clear "could you please get over yourself and shut the fuck up?" look. I silently glare back and bury my face into my scarf and try to stay calm.

After landing I rush to the currency exchange, get some plastic see-through Canadian dollars that are so stiff they won't fold into my wallet, and hit the bathrooms, where I pull a Madonna in *Desperately Seeking Susan*. Fuck this stress—I'm ready to be at the fucking show! I decide to set my frugality aside and just hail a cab to get me there. Screw negotiating tickets and train lines and terminals and coins. "How much to get to 486 Spanida Avenue?" "$40." "Here's $50, let's go!"

We drove past the financial district, past the famous CN Tower, through Chinatown, streets teaming with people, and half an hour later I'm walking up to the Silver Dollar, wondering how I'm gonna get inside, since my ticket is with a friend inside and my phone is OOS. By a sheer strike of luck I see the Bay's very own Max Wickham smoking outside, twiddling his drumsticks. He helps me out and before long I am inside as Triage are ending their last song. I'm seeing faces I know through the crowd, it's warm and there's a long bar extending before me like a runway to paradise. The vibe in the room is great and it feels like a reunion, a celebration. Drinks are hella cheap and they measure and mix 'em consistently, so intoxication, unlike my flight, is gradual and smooth. I'm chatting away, seeing old friends, meeting new people, sharing drinks and drugs and fears and ideas, passions and secrets. I'm getting a weird but very welcome sense of ease. Booze and conversation flows, people mingle, Sadicos hit the stage. Damn are they solid! Intense and uplifting, and watching Austin on drums is riveting. Impalers follow and it's as vigorous and imposing as I hoped; manic singer and all. Diät close off the night and I'm just over the moon with how good they are. I have been spinning the new record from the second I laid my bony fingers on a copy at Revolver a few weeks ago, and seeing that delivered live in a beautiful new city amongst some of the best punks on the planet felt like some kind of divine act of perfect universal timing. I passed on the karaoke and instead opted for after-hour quality time with friends, my body still on West Coast time, my brain tingling with delight. I fall asleep exhausted but truly happy to be where I was in that very moment.

The next day is sunny and cold, ideal for walking around, marveling at the autumn leaves, the black squirrels, and the good-looking folk on the street. Toronto feels like a posi city and the punks are hospitable, engaging and involved. Even the random people I encounter are suspiciously nice—the taxi drivers, the corner store employees, the drug dealers, even at airport security the guards were cracking (polite) jokes with people in line. Not as terrorizing as some of their US counterparts…

Surprisingly without a hangover I shuffle my feet outside D-Beatstro where Strutter, Blank Spell, Sadicos and Desgraciados are about to play. The space is sizeable but cozy, the sound is pretty good and they all play tight sets. I buy a bunch of tapes and talk to a bunch of cool people about their projects and plans, about *MRR* and what's up in the Bay, how things are back in Greece, how things are in their city, the expected catch-up chit-chat. After the third "so when are you gonna come see us in _____?" (enter city name) I couldn't help but feel the world expand (and yet shrink) in front of my eyes just a little. Congregated with punks from a vast variation of places, all connected by this thing we love and call punk, the limitations of space seemed to shift. Time, however, I could see it run ahead of me, eyes in the back of its head glaring at me, sneering at how I will always be one step behind. Every moment felt imperative. There is no up or down anymore. Only forward.

The night only gets better with a stunning show by local rippers S.H.I.T., whose music and delivery grabs you by the face and makes for a hella fun pit. Texas's Glue have morphed into a wild animal foaming at the mouth, and Barcelona's Una Bèstia Incontrolable, are undoubtedly one of the best bands I have ever seen live. Punk orgasmica. "De puta madre." *And* they played the after show at a sick punk-run space called Soybomb! There's a half pipe in the middle, which makes for loads of slippery fun during CCTV (yes, they're really good!) and Digital Octopus (Ridiculous? Ingenious? Does it really matter?). It also proves an ideal place to stand and enjoy the view as people go nuts during Una Bèstia Incontrolable, fest-organizer Greg Benedetto actually standing in front of the drums, protecting them from the pit! There's an area for merch in the back, a couch corner on one end, a well stocked bar, friendly punks running the doors, a working (beautiful!) bathroom, and the neatest sound booth, protected by chicken wire, cables all neatly hung inside and the nicest chap doing sound. To top it off, there's a flipping rooftop hangout area that has a view of downtown Toronto, the CN Tower and, that weekend, the chalk-white moon. A hand-drawn sign points to the back of the long rooftop. "Pee alley. Make out corner." Excellent! I'm turned up to eleven. There's a sense of connection in my interactions, communication feels organic and I'm too engrossed in the experience to be thinking about it. I'm sure I chain smoke and babble and stumbled and mumble, but it feels good to be raw and real and enthralled by it all. *Dame la droga, déjame bailar.*

Dumplings in Chinatown for breakfast the next day, then the newly opened Faith/Void record store/underground (literally) space, run by Ryan, the singer of S.H.I.T. He's done a fantastic job with the layout of the space (I'll say one thing: moving walls) and it's a great locale for the art show and panel on documenting punk. Browse the zines or flip through a hand-picked (and expanding) selection of punk and hardcore records, among other goodies. I wish there were more spaces like this in the Bay!

Five (!) shows to chose from tonight, but not before cocktails and a hot shower! Highlights of the night include Ajax and Boston Strangler, with Rixe and Orden Mundial just superseding my expectations. Rixe are as pogo perfect as it gets, the set short but kickass, and they played the self-titled track by almighty Camera Silens. Oh bliss! As soon as they were done Orden Mundial were playing the main room upstairs at thee old Silver Dollar and finally I got to experience the madness! There is a reason they are loved among punks worldwide—they are crazy good live and tight as fuck. Also, the coolest people! The after show of choice was at Soybomb, loads of fun, and Mommy from NYC killed it! At this point I'm sure I've crossed over into excess and exaggeration, waving my hands around, mixing drinks and languages. I was star-struck and somewhat dumbfounded. *Jusqu'ici tout va bien.*

By Sunday I could feel the comedown, more mental than physical. *Myn glas loopt ras.* I tried not to let my rampant emotions get in the way of enjoying what time I had left but I have no doubt I blushed and gushed. The Oreden Mundial and Una Bèstia crew, the fabulous Núria and Paola from Frau (both are simply the best), Pablo from Cadenaxo, Kazu from Punk and Destroy (thanks for the Lucky Strikes!), the NYC crew, Lauren, Santi, the LA punx, Max the Digital Octopus, Tom "precisely" Ellis aka Static Shock Weekend mastermind, the Diät boys, the one and only Paco. I feel so very luck to have spent the weekend with this awesome *peña* and all the local and traveling punks we shared moments with. Punk is love.

Seeing Blazing Eye rip it all up gave me back some vigor and I soaked up the energy. After the show we hung out at Sandy's from Fucked Up and she was so incredibly hospitable, and her porch view of the full moon was just stunning. Instead of drinking to forget how sad I would be the next day, in my mind I drank to celebrate. The power and impact of punk, the people who make it happen, the support and strength it gives us, the inspiration it fuels, and the hunger it feeds. I drift to sleep thinking of all the exciting prospects of what could lay ahead from here on out. The next day I face my fate. I say my reluctant goodbyes and Greg (the best) Benedetto drives me and Núria and Jeremy from Scalped to the airport. How fucking nice of him! I spend my last $20 CAN on one sandwich and one pint, with some loose change to prove to my up-coming SF self that this wasn't all a dream.

I'm dizzy on the first flight. I've got a full-blown fever by the time I board my second flight in Dallas, TX. I'm in a window seat with the two people next to me sleeping like the dead. I start to feel seriously nauseous, dripping hot, then shivering cold. I push the flight attendant button. I wait five minutes. I push the button again. I turn around and I see the flight attendants chatting in the rear with their backs to the passengers. I worry about throwing up in my seat. I start to work myself into a panic. I'm still turned around looking at the oblivious posse in the back. Too dizzy to even try getting up and I worry about puking on the lady next to me. The girl behind me offers me a tissue. The lady next to me wakes up and offers me some gum—possibly because the sugar would help but mainly because my breath smells like ass. In the meantime, the pressure (and my chronic jaw clenching/teeth grinding) has set off some kind of toothache and my lower right molar is hella swollen and sore and probably pussing. Fuck me. Eventually an attendant arrives, by which time I'm mad and extremely claustrophobic. "Can I have some water please?" I manage to whisper. "Excuse me miss?" "I just want a glass of water, *please?*" I snap at the guy. He pulls back rather shocked and I mumble something about being too young to die of a panic attack on an American Airlines flight, then look away to stare out the window at the yellow lights dotting the Bay beneath us.

After a half-hour wait on the runway post landing and by the time I get my luggage, my phone is about to die on me and BART is no longer running. I'm practically ready to collapse. People give me funny looks. That bad 'eh? No cabs in sight. "Excuse me miss, you can't smoke here." Whatever. I manage to split an Uber ride with some dorky museum guy and by 2:00 a.m. I'm unlocking my front door. 4:00 a.m. rolls around and I'm wide-awake. Jetlag fever. So tired yet so restless. I stare at the ceiling, sore, cold and delirious but somehow ecstatic in my anguish. Things seem inexplicably clear, some sort of prism effect in my mind. I want to freeze the frame and step out of the picture for a minute. So I decide to do just that.

By the time you read this I will have quit my job (thank you Revolver for being my halfway home, it's been a pleasure), moved out of my house, packed up all my things, booked a flight and…Wait, I shouldn't give it all away just yet. I'm keeping this column so no need to say any goodbyes because you'll be hearing from me soon!

lydia@maximumrocknroll.com

BRACE BELDEN is THE LAST PUNK

"I've been down so goddam long, that it looks like up to me"
—Leon Trotsky, in a letter to Jim Morrison.

One day: I've been waiting for an hour. Hot afternoon. West Oakland, right near the train station, and my bowels are tight and my legs ache. I am on a long stretch of sidewalk lined with a chain-link fence that surrounds an empty lot covered in wan, yellow weeds and cast-off detritus. I do not control my penis well and with each step I squirt a bit of urine down the leg of my pants. The sun, a hateful rotten thing, burns me and I wish it were done for, dead, blown out of the sky. I scan the gutter for cast-off cigarette butts that hold enough tobacco to warrant a bend.

The need for heroin is indescribable; I imagine it's akin to the thirst one would feel after being dry-mouthed in a desert for days.

Even now, writing this, my guts twist and my mind tingles just thinking about not even heroin, but the act of scoring, the process of injection. Imagine, then, how I felt as I trudged up and down the same street over and over and over again knowing that temporary reprieve was coming to me, but not knowing when and in the creases of my brain the realization of just how temporary that relief will be.

Gripped in my palms, greased with sweat, are two twenty-dollar bills and seven ones. I love this money. I have stolen it from the purse of my girlfriend, who is at work and unhappy and worried to death and texting me but I ignore her and wish I could shut off my phone. I can't, because what if Jacques, my M.S.–afflicted dealer, calls me. I feel like I'm going to vomit up my heart. I shake and I shiver, my bones feel weird.

Pacing back and forth, up and down the pavement so bright that it stings my eyes. I'm dehydrated, but at the same time I've lost control over my salivary glands and I drool onto the sidewalk. I'm leaking, that's the fact of it. I'm dripping slime from my cock and my mouth, not to mention the thick mucus clogging up my nose. Trapped in the weird cunt of Satan, gibbering and insane.

Time ceases to be so linear, days are just clusters of panic and relief, independent of outside influences. Each breath and you think you'll wake up from the nightmare. You're close, you can taste and even sometimes see sanity and cleanliness and peace but then you inhale once more and the stink of the gutter that is now your home slides its pungent tendrils up into your nose and shocks your brain with its animal electricity. I'm on the street, coughing as I hobble. Every person on the street I see makes my brain chant I-Wish-I-Were-You-I-Wish-I-Wasn't-Me. I'm jealous of cats and children. I avert my eyes from cop cars lest they see my crimes in my gaze.

That's most of what being a junkie is. It's waiting, it's feeling bad and waiting.

Visions: I would look in the mirror and see a burden on this world.

Midnight: Wake up in a panic, it's dark out, there's a knock. I owe money all over town and I'm dodging phone calls and ducking midnight visits and forcing myself to focus intensely on the next fix. It sounds cliché, in fact is cliché, but it's the truth and I can't say it any different. Having such a single-minded purpose gives life a certain purity. I know there' s nothing beyond the next fix, that I'm no longer destined for great things and that all my little projects thought up will never, ever come to fruition. My toenails leak pus. I clutch a weapon and sweat.

Dreams: Strangled rats, green-skinned women with bloated faces hanging by their hair from the BART tracks. Handfuls, armloads, trucks packed with heroin, and then you wake up, and not a bit of H in the house.

Sleeping: Needle baby roasting in a hot womb. The devil's in my asshole, screaming up my guts. In the night, I wake up and into the darkness I blink my eyes, but my vision is an awful mess and the lights are off anyways. Sweat dripping from my face into my open mouth, spit thick with mucus. Hobble to the washroom and out with a piece of shit the size of my forearm; I leave blood all over the bowl.

On street: Stumbling down the sidewalk and something'll catch my eye and remind me of my father, then I'll be sick for a moment and deadened with a great clock of responsibility. I see an acquaintance from my former life and duck into a doorway, shielding my face. When I buy needles in the drug store I tear away from the counter as I jam the "points" into my coat pocket, feeling wretched and ashamed. Can't listen to music because it reminds me of my past, a far-off, melancholy thing I can't stand to think of. Beauty makes me sad, and that may sound dramatic but it was true, then, and still sometimes is.

I blink in and out of reality. I have visions, I am psychotic and ill. My skin is rotting off me; I ache in strange places.

An afternoon: I'm in the bathroom of a Salvadorean pupuseria. Perched on the toilet, legs and feet thrashing about with The Fever, and I'm burning and melting what looks like rabbit shit but is actually heroin down into a brackish film, then I'm dropping a bit of meth in it and crunching that around with the cap of the needle, mixing up the stuff, then I'm dropping in a bit of cotton and staring at the cotton and stick in the needle in the coffin (My brain is saying: You *must not spill you must not spill* or else this nightmare will get even worse if you can believe it) and now my whole body is crawling with tiny mice nipping at my skin and I tie a shoelace or a sock (I used a sock so often!) around my bicep and draw up the vein which is hard 'cause I got rotten ones and then I jam the needle in the vein always towards my heart never down and then that old pushing of the plunger…shit, I can't even write about it, not really. I still get that old jonesing twitch. Even now, so much later, I am capable of crawling up the walls just *thinking* about it. I have to imagine a light switch turning off and actively focus my thoughts elsewhere. I grow wistful and nostalgic; my brain plays tricks on me, and I imagine a dose will take me back to times that never existed but still retain power in my head as the Ultimate.

Here's something: I have injected heroin into my arms in the bathroom of every all-night restaurant in this goddam rathole city.

Here's what I imagined: Sitting around listening to Miles play "'Round Midnight" while some girl curls up in your arm and you drift in and out, watching cigarette smoke disappear into the ceiling fan. Pleasure domes of Kubla Khan, a slow-push of the plunger into a James Dean arm on a skinny but muscled body in some lamplit boudoir. Living in a hazy glowing heaven, soundtracked with *Marquee Moon* and peopled with flawed and interesting angels.

Here's the truth: It was the hate-pits of the Interzone for me! Lost and alone in the heart of the whirlwind! An ugly place where insanity reigns. Even that makes the life sound much more dramatic than it is; in truth, all you'll be doing is waiting and waiting and waiting and *waiting*. Standing by a payphone, stomach in your throat.

A morning: Wake up drenched, I mean absolutely soaking, sheets so wet I think I pissed them. No money/no dope. Wretch and puke in the sink. My body stinks in new and frightening ways; I am repulsed by the aroma of rot, the stench of decay and wrecked organs.

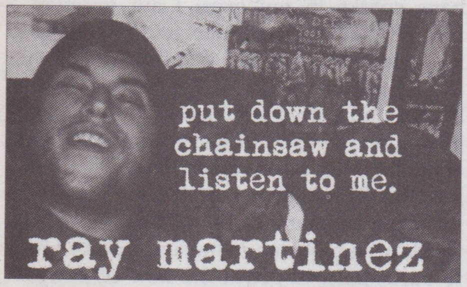
Another morning: I'm on the roof of an apartment building in downtown San Francisco. My girlfriend has kicked me out for stealing money from her bank account. I have awake up for several days, running myself down fast. My vision is blurred; I have sparks in my eyes. I am injecting a mix of methamphetamine and heroin, and it is while injecting this vile brew that I find myself surrounded by city police, handcuffed briefly, and I am the subject of some amount of commotion and pulse-checking. Then I am crammed into an ambulance and taken to the hospital. The doctors say: It's the nut-house for you, you poor, sick thing. This is all a blur, this is all happening *to* me, but I don't know to participate, to get in the flow of things. I resist with guile and trickery. My IQ is 1000. My destiny is set and true. I tell the doctors these things and they can see that I am not insane, but a man with a horrible future who has declared total war on himself and will let nothing stop him on the way to annihilation.

Some friendship: I am squirting the juice from fresh-cut limes into a bent and black-bottomed spoon in order to make the crushed crack cocaine nestled in its concave palatable to my misused and atrophied veins. I sit in the apartment of the only running partner I ever had, a lanky pockmarked guy named Trevor who, like myself at the time, lived with his straight and normal girlfriend whom he hid his ugly self from. I have been up for many days and I feel like the Solution. I know I'm right in every action I take and after we shoot the crack Trevor takes aim with his BB gun and fires it out the window and kills an pigeon and I squeal with weird delight and he sobs big ugly tears onto the linoleum in the kitchen. Several days later, during an argument about Xanax with a street urchin, he will be struck in the face with an empty beer bottle and I will take him to the hospital and then never see him again.

The things I gave up: All trust and safety, all love and friendship, all hopes and dreams. This is no exaggeration, no meaningless hyperbolic drama junk. I lost every single thing in my life. I sold records, stolen rings, I pilfered money and trinkets and cash from work. I lost almost all sense of self. I've made amends, mostly, for what I've done, but I still carry a heavy cloak of guilt around my shoulders that weighs me down and sometimes sinks me into a black mood. Sometimes I make like I was then, I stare in the mirror and feel sick. I guess I'll have these thoughts for a while yet, these awful confusion of feelings and memories.

Here's my advice: Stay away from the heavy operators. Don't fool around with crazy demons. Buy an automatic. Pay your debts. Eat healthy and hug your mother. Grasp each and every moment and kiss it with tongue.

A postscript: I apologize if this isn't as lucid as my usual columns. My reasons for writing this are mostly a mystery to me, but I know I had to do it because I need the cathartic release that this vomit of words is giving me. It's selfish, I admit it, and I hope it doesn't read like some self-serving whining about all those bad times and how rotten I felt. That's not my intention, and if it comes off like that, forgive me.



We had an extended bit of summer a couple weeks ago and I decided to take advantage of it by taking a long walk over to Quimby's to check out their new zine and book arrivals.

Finding plenty on the shelves, but far less in my wallet, I ducked out before I could pick up my *No Friends* consignment money and put myself into the unenviable (and psychically confusing) position of being in debt to myself. Doing some rough math, I figured I had enough for a beer and a shot at a neighborhood bar. Unfortunately, Wicker Park is less of a neighborhood than a shopping district these days—unless you want to consider C.M. Punk your neighbor, and I don't necessarily find people who throw other people off ladders for a living to be all that neighborly.

Instead of trying to find a place nearby, I went on a stroll down towards Division Street. While that street is getting shinier and cleaner, filled with fewer and fewer junk shops and more and more junk people, there is still the occasional patch of old Chicago there. The walk also gave me a chance to swing by the block where Nelson Algren's old apartment was and think about how Frankie Machine would have fared against the neighborhood's new generation of drunks and junkies, with their art school degrees, $200 sneakers, and DJ nights.

As I passed bar after identical bar, with too many TVs, too loud music, and too self-assured patrons, I wondered if it was even worth trying to get a drink around there anymore.

I remembered an old corner bar, further south in the Ukranian Village neighborhood. Back when I lived in the city the first time, it was named Tuman's Alcohol Abuse Center. A lot of younger people, like myself at the time, found that name to be roaringly funny. The old Ukrainian immigrants, with their old Ukrainian ways, and old, stern Ukrainian looks of disapproval that only someone fleeing Eastern European communism and immigrating to Chicago and years later watching their neighborhood slowly becoming overrun with lefty-commie artists—and terribly unorganized and lazy ones at that!—could give. The old neighborhood eventually got their way though, and the "Alcohol Abuse Center" was closed, the name scrubbed off the hand-painted dingy corner window and became, simply "Tuman's." And in the end that old generation, for the most part, died happily knowing that no one was abusing the alcohol they so rightly earned.

For all their work nowadays you can sit there for hours watching the game, and instead of hearing grad school communists arguing theory and playing board and card games (both poorly), you have the privilege of hearing 30-somethings with no accents talk about pivoting their brands and how they would go to Canada, or somewhere, if Trump were elected President.

I'm not so sure if I can stand with Ukraine on that one.

Eventually I ended up at a cozy corner bar just off Division. Not the kind of place where people go to be seen as much as the kind of place people go to drink alone and be avoided. The makeup of the clientele was exactly to my liking—people at the bar, drifting in and out of conversations and sociability, people arguing over who had next at the pool table and who shortchanged who on the bet that absolutely, under no circumstances, took place on the last game. Women ignoring the men who more and more between orders considered, possibly, making a move, but then remembered the consequences of it going bad, or even worse, going right. Remembering that this is the last place here they have left to be left to drink alone in a crowd.

My kind of people.

I bellied up to the bar. There was a lovely bartender with short cropped hair dyed an impossible color with a few tattoos peeking out of her long-sleeve shirt. In any other bar in the neighborhood she'd be some jerk, record collecting, slob graphic designer's manic-pixie dream girl, being ordered to serve him in some weird psychosexual state of arrested development. But here she was just the person you were polite and smiled to 'cause she was closest to the booze.

She was pouring a drink to the only other person at the bar, an incredibly old man with a demeanor that made you want to ask him a million questions, but you knew better than to.

But being that I'm both rather thickheaded and loudmouthed, I figured I pitch a penny on striking up a conversation with him. I figured, what's the worst that could happen? I get kicked out of his bar and then just wait a few months for him to keel over and head back.

I could wait this one out.

As I ordered my drink, the man was finishing his rant, "…if work is so good for you, how come they got rid of the twelve-hour day?"

My kind of people, indeed.

Even though I agreed with him, I knew that he would argue with me about whatever I had to say anyway, so I figured I could at least tease him a little bit and hear a little more of his argument. The woman behind the bar had been trying her best not to say anything to him that she wasn't reading directly off a bottle.

"What's wrong with a little work? We all gotta do it."

He turned to me, look me up and down, let out a little snort (I'm not sure if a snort can be dignified, but if it could be, this would have been a snort worthy of a duke or king) and asked, "And exactly what do *you* know about work?"

He had a point.

"Your generation doesn't even know the value of a good loafin'. How the heck can you even talk to me about work, when there's no work even left in this country. You couldn't even begin to appreciate a good mid-day drunk on a Wednesday!"

I had to concede this one as well. He definitely had more gusto and appreciation for his 3:00 p.m. cognac than I had for my whiskey and coke—"A cheap quack's cough relief of a drink," as he dismissed it.

"Well, sir, you make some good arguments," I chuckled, "but I'm not here to argue. I'm just trying to have a drink in a bar that isn't a TV showroom or a club."

His eyes slightly lit up. Well, I think they lit up—to be honest it was hard to see them through his wrinkled, floating gaze of a squint.

"First off, don't call me sir. Hate it. I'm no sir—ain't no bum, either!—but that kinda talk makes me uneasy. I feel like I should be looking over my shoulder for a cop or an alderman.

"And good luck finding a place like that these days around here. Used ta be *real* hospitality around drinkin' holes when I was your age. You could walk into any place and be greeted with the silence and indifference any respectable alkie deserved! No one askin' how you were doing, or god forbid, your name. Why the hell should I tell you my name? Why the hell you wanna know?!"

At this point I can't help but laugh.

He didn't find it so humorous.

"What's so funny, kid? You wanna laugh at the old Polish man at the bar? Well good for you. By the way, you don't look all that Polish. Got a little color to ya. What're you doing around here anyway? Didja get lost, or d'ya owe someone money?"

He found that to be hilarious, though.

While race and racism is still a huge problem in Chicago, there's a gentle kind of racial teasing in the city that I can appreciate. A very old school thing that a lot of people these days would prefer to get offended by instead of just playing along and kicking right back.

"I was actually look for some good pierogis in the neighborhood, but it seems like I'm gonna have to settle for some tacos instead. Don't got the money for a transfer back from the Loop to get to Wells."

He slightly deflated.

"Yeah. Damn shame, too. All up and down here, used to be nothing but us Polacks. Nothing but good, hardworking people. My parents came here to work an' have me and brother. Give me the great American chances and things they didn't…"

He took that moment to raise his glass slightly and rattle the ice.

"Now all youse got is a buncha overgrown kids acting like idiots. At least when the Mexicans moved in they made the place their own. You had family stores, and restaurants, and weird little holidays with skulls and cookies. Didn't understand it, but I could appreciate it. Now you just got what, a buncha the same stuff over and over, just with different price tags. The new artsy-fartsy yuppie type folks movin' in, pushin' all the Mexicans out, I don't even know what the hell they're doin' with themselves – yet alone the neighborhood.

"At least the beatniks were makin' something new, stupid as it was. The hippies—I hated 'em at the time—at least they tried to do something. I'm not sure what, but they tried. Seeing 'em on the TV in the park in '68 getting clobbered, I figured either they were as brave as the guys who fought for the eight hour, or dumber than the guys who fought the Machine. Even them weirdos, with the hair…"

He put both his palms together, as if in prayer, and then rested them on top of his head.

Let me tell you, watching a drunk, elderly man sneer and pretend to have a Mohawk in the middle of the afternoon, at the end of neighborhood bar, is one of those small pleasures you will forever cherish.

"The punk rockers," I said.

"Yeah. Them. At least they were *angry*. I can appreciate that. Why they wanted to call themselves 'punks' always beat me. That meant something totally different to the guys in my neighborhood. Hell, even the punks in my old neighborhood didn't want to be called punks—they said they had better names themselves! But those punker people, they were angry. *Really angry.* I remember when they started moving into the neighborhood 20, 25 years ago, and hanging 'round the bars. They fought every last guy who looked at 'em sideways. Felt like I was back in the '50s or something. Wild. Never could figure out what they were so angry about though. They had it so much better than I ever did when I was young. But still, they were *angry* about *something*."

I started getting a little worried about the old man at this point. He was working himself up pretty good. I shot the bartender a glance. She just gave a look and shrug of "he does this all the time."

I know I joked about waiting out for this guy to die earlier, but honestly, I didn't want to be responsible for it happening.

Plus, I still had most of my drink left.

"You walk around these old neighborhoods these days and people don't wanna be a part of nuthin'. They just wanna sell ya sumthin'. And usually it's stupid and you could probably do without it. Not that I got anything against tryin' to hustle a buck, not at all. But where did everyone go? These ain't people," he waved out towards the bar. "These are just ideas.

"These folks don't got a single thing in common besides the stuff that they wanna buy. Strip 'em naked and stick 'em in an empty room and they'd just sit around and stare. Probably wouldn't even know they were attracted to each other without someone sellin' sex to 'em.

"I'd gladly trade pierogis for tacos on Milwaukee Avenue again if it meant gettin' these slobs out of here. Who ever heard of going to college to talk about paintings? You can go downtown on Thursdays to the museum for free! Don't need a fancy degree and a bank loan to figure that one out…"

He kept on going, but I reached the bottom of my drink and only had enough left to leave a tip.

As I settled up I thanked him for the conversation. It's not often I get to complain with people who have an even larger, older view of all the things I can't stand about this city—and all American cities these days, really.

He mumbled back something in between "good talking to ya too" and "get the hell outta here."

As I made my way towards the door, I had to get one last question in.

"I never caught your name…"

The look he gave me could have stopped traffic.

"'Cause I didn't want you to have it."

I laughed a little, "Fair enough."

I walked to the door, and as I pulled it toward me, letting a rather uncomfortable amount of daylight into the place, I turned one last time and asked,

"It wouldn't be Grobnik, would it?"

And for the first the time, he let out a genuine laugh.

"Very funny, jackass. Maybe you ain't one of them slobs after all. Or maybe you're just a slob who likes to read old books."

He raised his glass to me and rattled his ice one last time.

Like I said, my kinda people.

ANDREW UNDERWOOD

Hey there *Maximum Rocknrollers*, it's probably a safe assumption that most of you are past your school years, but in tribute to those of you who still have to give up eight-plus hours of your day five times a week in an attempt to get an education, Pogo 77 Records has put out an incredible tribute to your travails. The *Do You Wanna Be a Punk Rocker?* compilation is worth picking up just for the photo insert. Endless, hilarious photos of Mr. Nori (of TOM & BOOT BOYS/ASUKA & THE BUM SERVANTS) trying in vain to teach a class consisting of members of the bands included on the comp, including a large color poster with an amazing class photo! Of course, the comp is stacked with killer bands as well. ASUKA & THE BUM SERVANTS kick things off with a solid slab of melodic punk ala VICE SQUAD/VIOLATORS (more on them later). RECONDISERATION offer up "Liar", a song that ditches the CONFUSE edge of their recent EP for a more goofy straight up punk style ala their demos. BEER BELLY, are as always, the fuckin' best. A minute and a half of speedy dumb pogo punk fun entitled "Too Drunk To Work" (yeah, been there myself). QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS are an absolute revelation, pitch-perfect UK'82 that recalls ONE WAY SYSTEM and ABRASIVE WHEELS with a fantastic melodic solo. FIN offer up a garage-y pop punk tune that joins the appealing looseness of CIGARETTEMAN with REGISTRATORS-like riffing. Finally, PISTOL JOKE close out the comp with a blast of super blown-out "Aaaaaah" noizecore, raw and raucous as always. It's not secret that 7" compilations are usually worth skipping, but this is 100% a winner in both content and presentation. Save up your lunch money for this one kids! (Pogo 77 Records)

Following up on their tantalizing *Police Comes* cassette single from early this year, ASUKA & THE BUM SERVANTS have finally dropped their debut EP, and it's a killer. They've built a unique sound by straddling the line between the more poppy pogo punk style and moments of more raw hardcore (check that dissonant guitar lead by Nori in "Fuckin' Shit Too Drunk"!). Supported by backing vocals from bassist Ricky, Asuka leads the band with confident if slightly thin vocals (which might be a recording issue), laying out lyrics that alternately joyful and surprisingly dark for the style. "Police Comes" is still a highlight, a complete masterwork that couples a catchy, sing-song vocal with a speedy PARTISANS style melodic but hard punk attack. "Punks Not Jobs" is a keeper as well, total a total CHAOS UK style repetitive plodder that could have been pulled from a *Punk & Disorderly* LP. It's no shock that what is essentially an all-star band produced a great EP, but goddamn, this is great stuff. (Pogo 77)

The DISORDER/STAGNATION *UK vs. Japan Noizecore Wars* split EP is still one of the year's best to me, and now it's been supplemented with *UK vs. Japan Noizecore Wars II,* an all-live CD that presents two very distinct recent DISORDER performances with one long-ish amazing STAGNATION set. The June 21, 2014 DISORDER set that kicks off the disc is a straightforward one, heavy on Taf's bass and vocals that presents a mix of classic songs ("Drop the Bomb (and Start a War)", "Rampton Song") and a spattering of new ones ("Victim of Police" from the STAGNATION split kicks off the set), with a GG ALLIN cover in the mix as well. The June 20, 2015 set includes one George Da Greek on saxophone and backing vocals, and is a much more loose, improvised affair. A couple of the songs don't quite work out, but the renditions of "Chaos and Disorder" and especially "Rampton Song" are inspired, and the whole thing is such a crazy chaotic mess that it's worth hearing for novelty value alone. The July 20, 2015 STAGNATION set is absolutely transcendent. Despite the fact that not many people seem to agree, I will always and forever keep harping on the fact that STAGNATION are an important band, maybe the most progressive band in the noizecore scene at the moment. These nine songs are almost free-jazz-like in their commitment to dissonance and rejection of structure, but just when you think the path might be lost, Hachi's bass comes roaring back to build things up again. Azusa's shouts and wails and moans (all heavily layered in reverb) are as much an instrument as the guitars and drums. This is music in its wildest, most primal form, owing as much to ALBERT AYLER as CONFUSE, and easily surpasses the *Live Terronoize* CD as a document of STAGNATION's power as a live unit. Pick this up for the fun DISORDER stuff, keep it for the incredible STAGNATION set. (Strong Mind Japan)

Hey, speaking of noizecore masters, ABORTICIDO are back! After last year's masterful debut EP, they have reappeared on a split flexi with Texas' LICKER, and they're still fucking kings of the style. The first three tracks are ultra-raw and fast, owing much less to SWANKYS than SIEG HEIL, though the busy bass provides a hint of melody through the veil of chaos. Vomitous vocals spill out over hardcore riffs, noize washes over all and it's a glorious, frenetic mess, capped off with a short and sweet punk song à la "Let's Dance to the Noise Punk" from the first EP. LICKER are pretty good but no match for ABORTICIDIO. Let's call them "entry level noizecore." Decent snotty vocals, straightforward riffs and no surprises to be had though I do think the drummer does a great job of adhering to the style while adding some interesting flourishes. The bummer about this record is that it's on Torture Garden Picture Company, a label run by one Eric T. Neal, who faked cancer and ripped off the Baltimore scene for a ton of benefit cash before skipping town for Texas. It baffles me that bands are still willing to work with that scumbag when a simple Google search will reveal his sordid past. I'm not sure how anybody could possibly atone for such an incredible act of deceit and villainy, but I wish bands wouldn't work with the label until he somehow makes amends with the people he lied to and ripped off in Baltimore. I don't know if I have a solid recommendation to make in this situation—the ABORTICIDIO stuff is amazing and worth having but I can't in good conscience support this label (I wouldn't have bought it had I known what label it was on). Follow your conscience, and if you have the chance please spread the word that Torture Garden Picture Company is run by a lying ripoff fuckhead.

ABSOLUT/PARANOID split LP. Sugi art. Fuckin' no-brainer right? Right. First of all: this LP looks like the 2xLP GUDON semi-discography, which is a beauty of a record. Second of all: new ABSOLUT! Sliding a bit further down the metal well on this release, but doing a great job of balancing the later ANTI-CIMEX style with the German thrash influence and including some fucking incredible Chelsea-esque solos (that solo at the end of "Mental Problem"? Get the fuck outta here. Amazing.). Four songs at 45 rpm that are over way too soon. Sweden's PARANOID hold up their end of the split admirably, adding flourishes of modern metallic hardcore to a classic D-beat backbone. It's really good stuff, but I just can't imagine reaching for this LP without immediately putting on the ABSOLUT side. (Beach Impediment/Brain Solvent Propaganda)

For a band that's been gone for quite a while, we are still getting a surprising amount of new INEPSY stuff these days. First the lost track flexi from the first LP sessions and now, even better, the lost 2000 demo! This *Unreleased Demo/Loudhouse 2000* tape is a fucking joy to listen to, capturing the band at the precipice of an amazing run laying down four songs of impeccable Motörpunk that would eventually appear as the classic *See You In Hell* EP. This is not a sub-par relic lost to time at all. Frankly, I can't imagine why it wasn't released at all beyond the rough recording quality. Gravel-throated vocals, raw rock-n-roll licks, blazing solos…everything that made INEPSY great is in place here, and I can't really say that these songs were in any way improved on in the years before the recording of the first EP (I think I like this version of "The Reaper Watches the Game" better!), though the wise punk will own both because this material is essential in all its forms. Also, bonus punk points to whoever did the design and layout of this cassette, it looks like one of the amazing '80s BCT releases. Fuckin' great. (Runstate Tapes).

As always, you can reach me via MRR or at agunderwood@gmail.com. Also, hello back to MAQUINA MUERTA, can't wait for that split with DHK!

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On Tour with Royal Headache: Part 1 of 2

When I heard Royal Headache was releasing their second LP, I was in slight disbelief that it was finally coming out, but also pleasantly surprised. I remember speaking to Lawrence (on guitar) about it three years ago when I'd hung out with them briefly on their last US tour, and discussing their plans to release it the following year, in 2013, and possibly tour Europe. It never eventuated. They released a single off Matador Records and the band fell silent, playing the odd show here and there, but for the most part, the next few years dragged by with little heard from the Royal Headache front. And then this. I contacted Lawrence to offer my congratulations and express my excitement on them touring the States. I would once again be in the local area and hopefully be able to see a show, and catch up on how they're going and news from back home. They weren't playing a show in Cleveland, but after a bit of correspondence, I made plans to fly to Boston to see their first show entering back into the US from Canada. I would join them in the van on the last six dates of their tour on the East Coast.

Monday, August 24, Boston, MA: Monday morning I was in Pittsburgh and spiky punk Skull Fest had just finished. It was a sweaty weekend of crammed and dark showrooms full of stale cigarette smoke, harsh fast noise and catching up with interstate friends inclined toward raw punk and hardcore music. The world I foresaw, just a short plane ride away, seemed so different. They had at least a few things in common though: good music and a hell of a long party with good company all around.

I got into Boston and had the afternoon to explore before the show that night. The first person on the tour I met was only person I didn't know. Jeff Rice, who was driving the band around, met Royal Headache when his band, Daylight Robbery, toured Australia a few years ago. Together, with mutual Boston friend, Jen Mace (who played in the Australian band Nervous Trend before getting deported back to the USA), we got dinner before walking over to The Great Scott, where the show would be held that night. Royal Headache were sound checking, so we hung out front in the interim. One by one they emerged and I greeted these friends I hadn't seen in months, yet it quickly felt like we'd never parted ways. We briefly caught up on small life details before they went and got some dinner for themselves. Kevin, the brain behind What's Your Rupture?, was also travelling along. The venue was sold out, just like most nights on their tour at venues sporting capacities between 200-400. Although all door spots were filled and the show was sold out, the door guy let me in purely because having to deal with me meant holding up the long line quickly accumulating. There was only one local on this show. Most shows afterwards would follow the same trend of one local, the touring support act, Sheer Mag from Philly, and then the headlining international. Along with this trend, would be Sheer Mag playing the same set every night (not complaining and it's understandable when every night there is a different crowd), as well as the local support generally being boring and not memorable. There were a few exceptions in the shows I saw. However, the Boston support was not one of these exceptions.

I watched the first band, the Channels, from the back of a half-full, and quickly filling, venue, scrunching my face in distaste as if it would help me scrutinize their sound and what they were comparable to in terms of inspiration and genre. I was trying to figure out their deal from a few different angles and got nowhere. Other people had mixed reviews.

Sheer Mag were on next, and I'll admit, I haven't given their tracks much time. If other people like a band, I'll pass them off as a hype band and write them off without good cause. But Sheer Mag's feel-good songs, easy stage presence, and the way they work with each other won me over within seconds of them burning into their first song. They were their own biggest fans, nodding their heads and grooving to their own tunes, throwing their arms up unintentionally, accentuating the beats, and the fact that they were into their own music more than anyone else they'd ever performed for. Like Royal Headache, I never got sick of listening to their tunes over the following week.

This was the only night on the tour I saw Royal Headache properly. The other nights I opted to do the merch as a way of helping out, feeling in some way that I was a bit of a dead weight to the band who were letting me hang out for the week. I stood by the side of stage and danced along to tunes off their first LP, some of the songs off the new LP, and one or two songs that were unrecorded but still fit in well into their unplanned set. It had been over a year since this Melbournian had seen these Sydney-siders live and they seemed out of control, messy, yet passionate. The crowd up front were packed in tight and yelling along to all the songs, having the occasional crowd surf, which Shogun took the opportunity to join in on.

It was over pretty quickly once the show started—hurray for the three-band bill! They loaded the gear out and we drove 40 minutes to the house we were staying at that night. It was the same house and people we stayed with three years ago when I had gone with them to Boston. It was strange being back there; I definitely never thought I would be. Taking advantage of the short drive ahead the next day, we stayed up late, had a few drinks, and chatted about the show, stories of other times we'd all hung out together, and other such things.

Tuesday, August 25, Brooklyn, NY: The drive from Boston to New York isn't a long one but can easily double in time with traffic, so we hit the road around noon. Destination: Brooklyn. It wasn't too eventful and not very chatty. Everyone was just taking time to themselves with a few breaks along the way for a bite or toilet break. We got through the winding and hectic freeways and loaded gear out at Rough Trade. It was located near the East River, so we took a walk to get some falafel that we munched on while looking at the Manhattan skyline. Royal Headache had a few interviews to do pre-show. One they did on the street for a British DIY magazine and another at a bar nearby for the *Sydney Morning Herald*. Jeff and I got busy on the pinball machine while waiting. I predicted the beginning of the end when Jeff, Lawrence, and I went to buy liquor to drink backstage. For me, at least, it was accurate when I found myself projectile vomiting all over the sidewalk later that night. What happened between the beginning and the end is more noteworthy though.

All the bands had a greenroom backstage. It was kinda luxurious having a backstage "pass," being able to sit back there, and hang out. I was having way too much of a good time being able to walk backstage, watch the show from above, and hang out in the green room, where I spent most of my time when I wasn't watching the show or covering the merch table.

The local support was Home Blitz, who, apparently, haven't played a show in around two years. I bought a 12" of theirs a few years ago and enjoyed the poppier stuff on it, but never really bothered to get into the noise aspect of sound fusion. Admittedly, it's not bad, but I just wasn't in the mood for it. I watched less that five minutes of their set, then went outside for a smoke. I was on the fast path to being obliterated with my jar of moonshine.

The crowd was as stale as week-old bread, especially compared to all the other shows where there was always a bunch of people having a good time up front, jumping around, and crowd surfing. Jen, who came down from Boston for the show, and I spent time dancing on the upper level by ourselves, before I ran down the stairs to take over the merch.

We went to a bar afterward, and this is when the details get super hazy. I woke up in Kevin's apartment with a killer hangover and not remembering how I got back there.

Wednesday August 26, day off in Brooklyn: I spent the majority of the day feeling horrible from the night before. By early afternoon, we had all woken up and collected ourselves enough to venture out into New York for a day out and a night off from shows. We split into two groups; Kevin, Joe and Shorty went record shopping, while Laurence, Shogun, Johnny, Jeff and myself went to play pinball. We went into Manhattan, screwed around on a bunch of pinball machines for an hour, had a few beers at a bar nearby, then made our way to the ferry that would take us from Manhattan back to Brooklyn so we could meet the others for some late night pizza. It was chill and relaxing. The view of Manhattan from the water at sunset was beautiful in a way that only a steel jungle with decades of different architecture could be. We met up with everyone at Roberta's Pizza and finally ate around 10:30pm. We got back to the house and crashed out around midnight, after a long day out in a big city, ready to continue on with the rest of the tour tomorrow.

FELIX HAVOC
FIN DE SIÈCLE ANGST

Last month I talked a lot about the initial growth of the crossover scene and how it was received at the time. I recently remembered sitting outside a show (I think it was Government Issue at the Hall of Nations in Georgetown) and someone handed me a flyer for an SSD show. A woman was walking just behind the person handing out the flyers and telling us all, "Don't go to that show, SSD sold out, they went metal." This was not an uncommon sentiment at the time, but it's worth bringing up as an example of some of the debate within the scene about integrity and motives of bands that were moving into a metal direction.

When we talk about crossover, are we just talking about punk mixed with metal? I say no, that crossover belongs to a time and place (basically 1985 to 1988) and a certain group of bands that explored the same territory with the same zeal at the same point in time. Before was hardcore, punk, and thrash, and after was death metal, crust, and grind. Most of these bands had roots in the hardcore scene. Some were among the most popular and successful of hardcore bands, others were marginal at best until introducing metal to their sound, and many were not very good at metal and should have stuck with hardcore punk. A few bands reached their absolute peak in the crossover era and left monumental records for the ages, but played in different styles before and since. There are a lot of outliers to this story—metal bands with some hardcore influence, punk bands that dabbled in metal, etc.—and many of my judgments will probably be questioned by others, so consider them subjective. As I noted, when this whole scene went down I was sixteen-to-eighteen years old, and although passionate about music, I was not in possession of the knowledge at anyone's fingertips today.

One of the most frequently criticized aspects of the crossover era, was the move from underground hardcore to more mainstream metal labels. One such label was Death Records. I don't know too much about this label, it was a sub label of Enigma, which had released many punk, new wave and metal records since the early '80s, but seemed rooted in the Hollywood music business, despite its indie cred. But the point was that a new label had started to capitalize on the new movement in underground music. The branding and marketing of this label was intent on pushing crossover as a distinct new sound and vibe. Death Records was right on the spot as this new movement burst forth and released a few of the most essential sides of the era.

According to legend, a 1985 show at the Loft in Baltimore where Corrosion of Conformity opened for Slayer got this ball rolling. This show is memorable for me, because was there, and left after Corrosion of Conformity played, not sticking around to see Slayer about whom I knew nothing. I had seen their record at the store and saw them wearing makeup and stuff and figured it sucked. A few months later I really regretted this decision, but at the time metal was just that far off my radar. Anyway, the dudes in Slayer watched Corrosion of Conformity and were really impressed. They told them, "Tomorrow we are gonna make some phone calls and get you signed to our label" and it actually happened. So we start our discussion with Corrosion of Conformity's *Animosity* LP on Death Records.

Corrosion of Conformity, of course, started in the hardcore scene, and one thing that set these guys apart was that they could really play. I remember seeing them as a hardcore band, and then a year or two later they rolled through playing the *Animosit-* era stuff (this when I saw them in Baltimore, and DC the night before) with slightly longer hair, but a intense new energy to their music. For me, this LP is one of the top five of the whole metal/hardcore era. Like a lot of these records, to our ears today, it sounds more like a hardcore record. But if you get in your way back machine and compare it to the hardcore that came before it, it's got a very serious metal influence with the chugging riffs, build ups, and wild leads. This record has a level of energy and intensity that only the very best records have. It is relentless stop to finish with no weak tracks and retains its sense of power on the *slow* songs which most bands that play slow fail to do. *Animosity* is one of those records that doesn't so much have a "mix" or "tone" as it does its own *atmosphere*, a dark, foreboding, intense *power*. This one also saw Pushead start to transition from hardcore punk into metal cover art. This is one of those "peak" albums alluded to above. Corrosion of Conformity put out good material before this and a little decent material after this, but this LP shows them as masters of their art. That bass intro to "Positive Outlook"—you're moshing! Sadly they never lived up to this LP and have a long career as some kind of stoner/southern rock band that continues to this day. They might be good at that kind of music, but no one is gonna make a steamroller of a record like *Animosity* again.

DRI – *Dealing With It!* LP: I touched on this record last month. Again, today this sounds like a hardcore record. But compared to how DRI sounded before, this is showing some serious metal influence, lots of chugging riffs and the like. I don't think this LP is nearly as good as the *Dirty Rotten* LP, but it's still pretty good. The main point here is that DRI kind of led the movement from thrash to metal. DRI were very popular in their day and were widely regarded as the fastest, most intense band. If you look through your record collection, you will see a lot of people wearing the "Violent Pacification" shirt—that shit was everywhere. I really liked this record, but I don't feel like it's held up as well, certainly not as well as the *Dirty Rotten* LP, which has such unbridled mania and energy.

DRI – *Crossover* LP: DRI really jumped headlong onto the bandwagon here and named their next LP after the nascent movement. This LP falls pretty flat, and after 30 years of hindsight we can dispense with the hype and put this is in the "couple tracks" category. I know there's a whole subgroup out there that swears by this LP, but mostly because it was the first cassette they bought at the mall when they were in high school after seeing it advertised in *Thrasher* or whatever. Compare and contrast to the *Dirty Rotten* LP and this one just can't stand up—it's slow and somewhat ponderous. Just as *Dealing With It!* kind of presaged the move from hardcore to metal, this LP presaged the movement from the intense energy of the crossover scene to the mediocrity of former hardcore bands playing metal over the next few decades.

Cryptic Slaughter – *Convicted* LP: Another early release on Death Records, this one fails to stand the test of time. It's enthusiastic thrash, but lacks the hooks and finesse. It somewhat foreshadows a lot of grind and powerviolence for being a wall of speed and noise, and I'm sure it has a cult following, but this band went back to the practice room and came back in 1987 with…

***Money Talks* LP:** Here we get a more mature Cryptic Slaughter, playing really fucking fast for 1987, but with much more memorable and catchy songs. Not quite top five material, but really solid and raging and pretty influential in its own cult way.

Doctor – *This Island Earth* LP: Last but not least in our Death Records stable was Oxnard's Dr. Know. Most hardcore bands that tried to play metal couldn't pull it off. Dr. Know was one of the few bands who I feel were really great at both genres (along with Broken Bones, English Dogs and Corrosion of Conformity). *This Island Earth* is one of the greats of crossover bringing the energy and intensity of punk and the musicianship and drama of metal. I remember going to see Dr. Know at the King Kong Club outside of DC in the '80s. There was a whole crowd there who just kept chanting "'Fist Fuck,' 'Fist Fuck!'" until the band finally played it. Then they all left and it was me and five other people watching Dr. Know play to an otherwise empty club. Kyle walked up to each of us after the set and asked if we would buy their record. I did, it was the *Plug In Jesus* LP and it remains a rager to this day. You can hear the metal influence seeping in around the hardcore on *Plug In Jesus*. There's some chugging riffs, some wailing leads, but I would still regard this to be a hardcore record, and a damn good one at that. That was 1984. In 1986 Dr. Know returned on the Death label, with *This Island Earth*. Right away you know there is some kind of departure from their previous style. The cover art features a stormy sky and lightning strike. The first song is a DOA cover, paying homage to their roots in punk? But for the most part the songs are slower, more metal and rely more on structure than speed. That said some of the songs here remain solidly rooted in punk rock, despite the metallic guitar tone and wild solos. But it's in one of the more metallic songs that the real power kicks in. The title track is a serious rager with a Celtic Frost inspired riff. When he goes *"the hand of death it touches me right between the eyes...you will learn, to watch it burn!"* it's time to start wrecking shit.

Concluding our examination of the Death Records roster, it's Dr. Knows 1988 LP *Wreckage in Flesh*. This one is probably not highly regarded by many, but I personally think it's pretty awesome. It's got some incredibly cheesy cover artwork, which probably made most people who "take music seriously" disregard it at the outset. While the music has progressed much further into metal territory, notably with a lot of double bass, it's still the same formulae as *Plug in Jesus* and *This Island Earth*, just with a bit more chugging and thumping. When this record came out I taped it, so I wouldn't have to look at the cheesy cover and listened to it on my walkman so as to appreciate it more objectively, and now many years later I'm still backing it. Remember what I said about many bands failing at playing slow? Dr. Know have some really sick slower parts on this record, heavy and gripping without dragging or plodding. And not to be forgotten, this LP closes with a really good cover of Sabbath's "Into the Void." I'm not expert on Sabbath covers, but this is one of my favorites.

Death Records put out some other ill jams, notably Beyond Possession, who certainly have their adherents (especially in Canada) but I never got into, and the just OK Angkor Wat and Ugly Americans. This label was also notable as a vehicle for the Mentors, whom I have never been able to stomach.

EAT, PRAY, SHLUB.
STUPID PARTY
COLIN ATROPHY

It's been a little more than a month since I moved out of New York City. I'm still living in Austin, still retired. Did I tell you I retired? It's temporary, but basically it's like this: I got this book advance a few years ago and I never stopped working my diner job. I wrote the book and it's been published and I've moved to Austin and now I'm retired for the time being, which is partially code for "I don't have a job yet" but also code for "I'm not trying that hard to find one."

Things have been great! Aside from Austin's two *major* flaws (no bagels, no rap radio), it's really cool here. I go swimming all the time in natural bodies of water, I eat super well, I live with and am building a life with someone I love a ton and who does cool work and who I'm inspired by and stoked on just about every day.

And my cats, despite my fears that they would be truly scared, have taken the whole move in stride and seem to really feel at home in the new place. See, not only have I never moved out of New York before, but until two years ago, I lived in the same apartment for almost a decade. Sal and Growler (the cats in question) lived in one other apartment for like six months when they were tiny kittens, but basically they had spent their entire lives up until that move in the first apartment, and let me tell you, they freaked out about leaving. I've had them since they were a few days old and during the first week they both would try and drink milk out of my nipples while I slept and I'm a big softy already but basically I mom them way too hard and get super worried about their well-being in ways that are probably about projecting because I'm unwilling to acknowledge that I need to be nurtured and cared for and I refuse to ask for that so I put it all on them.

Anyway, my cats. They live in Texas and they're stoked. They live with two dogs and don't care, which is crazy to me because the handful of times dogs came over to my apartment in New York they freaked out. These dogs are cool, though. Becca has a dog named Gus—who is a big, floppy, bloodhound with dwarfism so he has a giant body and little tiny legs—and our roommate Melody has a Chihuahua named Ace who just wants to hang out all the time.

So like two or three weeks ago Becca's friend found a stray. She just wandered into his house and his dog was freaking out so we said we'd hang on to her for a couple days until we could figure out what to do to keep her out of a kill shelter. She's a smaller pit mix and she was a real chiller. We named her Kira after Kira Roessler because we're punks.

I was stressed about the cats, but they were fine. Kira was curious about them but seemed to leave them be if they would hiss or hide for two long. Having a new dog was kind of a pain in the ass or whatever—she would wake us up in the middle of the night or like, crap on the floor, (Puppy Shit, literally and figuratively)—but it was nothing we couldn't handle.

Then the day before Halloween, we came home from some errands and like, five minutes after we let Kira out of her crate I heard this crazy sound and Kira was in me and Becca's closet with Growler in her actual mouth and she wasn't biting hard or trying to hurt her because if she had been Growler woulda been toast, she was just trying to play. But Growler didn't wanna play and was in fact terrified and we got Kira off her and back in her crate and I picked Growler up and she was so limp and scared in my arms and covered in piss because she pissed herself, and I just lost it.

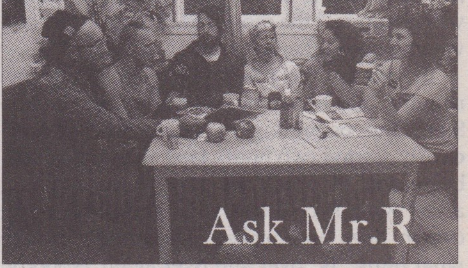
I kept it together long enough to wash Growler off, make sure she wasn't hurt, just scared. I wrapped her in a blanket and hid her somewhere away from the dog where she could relax and decompress, and then I sat down on the bed and I couldn't even think I was so checked out. Becca came in to see if I was okay and I could barely talk beyond apologizing that I didn't want to go to the Halloween party we had planned on going to that night. She made it clear that I had nothing to be sorry for and tried her best to talk to me, but I was incredibly unreceptive to communication.

She went to the party after I told her I needed to be alone and I just lay there and stared at the ceiling for a while. Eventually I started walking around the room and then I started walking around the rest of the apartment and then I sat down on the couch and watched TV. Barely functional.

It seemed like everything was wrong. I wasn't regretting moving to Austin, or taking in Kira. Those things seemed incidental. It was more like, everything in my life had been wrong. I realized it was the four-year anniversary of when I quit drinking and I wondered what the point even was, because if I was wasted at I least wouldn't give a shit about any of it. I used booze for years to create a barrier between myself and my emotions. Even after four years off the stuff, feeling them can still be jarring.

Eventually I eased up a bit, realizing I wasn't gonna feel better any time soon. Better not to fight it. I decided to explicitly name the things that were bothering me, articulate my interiority, something I wouldn't have done four years ago. I was shaken because a living thing I love and whose well-being I feel responsible for was put into a dangerous and scary situation that I had been unable to defend them from. I felt like a failure as a mother and protector. I felt an acute awareness of the fragility of life. I sat with those feelings, something else I wouldn't have done four years ago.

Becca got home, we went to sleep. In the morning I woke up feeling fine. That was five or six days ago now and the shit feeling is barely a memory, but it was an unpleasant reminder of how I felt for a long time. I haven't felt like that for a while, I thought I had gotten immune to it or grown out of it or whatever. But the truth is that my sense of well-being is incredibly precarious and I actually work really hard to keep myself not feeling like shit each day. So I wanna thank Kira the Dog for pulling the floor out from under me and reminding me of all the work that it takes to keep it there. It's been four years since I've quit drinking and I've come a long way and I'm proud of myself.



I don't think anyone should take advice, but there are probably a lot of things for the punks to talk about, and we might as well do it here. Think of it more as an opinion *column though. (...and if we need a tagline for that I hope it can be something as vague as: "A column for people who are intrigued by subtle differences between the "punks" and the "punx.")*

Text a question to 510-585-HELP (510-585-4357)! Apparently you can also call that number and leave a message like a weirdo, or just send a regular assed email to: askmrr@mail.com. Oh, and post script, if you are sending a question that is time sensitive, let me know so that I can get you a timely response!

Dear Mr. R,

From my modest perspective as an active part of DIY for a handful of years, I have noticed that many punks/mutants/city rockers develop an identity based around what they like. You know these types (and I mean nothing negative by that), i.e. the "D-beat punk", "'82 worship" people, etc. While I understand aesthetic is important to the dynamics of punk and I fully support the concept of displaying one's likes (or dislikes) I also feel that these ways of dress can correlate with a close-minded view of punk. I have often come across some individuals that only listen to what they deem worthy of their image. Meaning that if something isn't from Europe circa 1982 (or at least sounds and looks just like it), it isn't worthy of their time. What is your take on the self-labeling of punks?

Note: I have always dressed as I see fit and love all forms of punk, I just don't pick one subgenre to embody entirely.

—Ian

I suppose I don't really know how people who aren't punks even choose clothes for themselves. Like, they might as well just put on anything from the store, because who cares. But from what I can tell of how they tend to make the decision, it seems pretty similar to the way punks do it. Basically we're all just trying to align ourselves with what we see as our culture and then how we feel the most comfortable within it, right? I mean, technically, for punks, self-expression in clothing can be the same as being in a band that has a "sound" or being an artist with a particular style. Your cut-and-paste zine style vs. a computer layout, your super clean crisp black band shirt vs. a super torn up beer spattered one. It doesn't have to make you narrow-minded, it can just mean you know where you feel the most comfortable. It's how we find each other in public!

It sounds like the problem you may be running into here is regular ol' punk elitism. Since the beginning of punk time (which clearly started two hours later than the actual beginning of time), we have been arguing about what is cool and what sucks. We have drawn lines and picked fights and defined what punk "is" over and over again. Nobody is right. But what we *do* know is that 1) having a specific idea of the music you think is "best" is totally fine. You can choose to only listen to the same hardcore record every day for your whole life if you feel like it. It'll be hard to keep roommates longer than a few months, but you do you. 2) Being an asshole to other people about their musical taste is boring and unnecessary. I mean, it's fun to argue about music with your friends, but you gotta chill out with that. 3) Pretending you don't like certain bands in order to fit into some idea of what's punk is a sad story. That's not the point of what we're doing here at all. :(

Dear Mr.R,

What is your opinion on bands booking tours before playing a single local show or putting out a demo? Is it OK because they put in time elsewhere or is it a drain on the limited resources in the towns they play?

Like, should a band have to pay their dues at home before they earn the right to tour into the world? Well, it seems that a lot of people have a particular idea of the right way a band should do things, and there can be a sensical order to the process, but I think that's mainly because ordinarily it would be the most practical path to take, but not because it needs to be the law of the land. What I mean by that, is that if you are in a relatively new band, or are relatively new to touring, it makes sense that you would play a lot of shows at home, become comfortable with what you're doing, record something, play with other touring bands, book a tour through their towns, make some t-shirts, hope people show up and give you some gas money, make friends, go home, and do it all again next summer. And this is generally the order of things because it's way harder to book a tour when you don't know anybody, and have no friends saying "book the Crap Holes, they're our friends," "they sound like that thing everyone likes right now," "we played with them once," etc. Because honestly, I don't think I would characterize towns as having limited resources, as much as I would characterize them as being not invested in booking something they have no connection to. People love when touring bands come to town. It can get boring to hear the same local bands all the time, and, depending on where you live, the same ten people might make up eighty percent of the bands. So it doesn't feel so much like a drain on the scene as it does a refresher.

However, when there is so much that goes into setting up a show (see last month's column), it might not be worth the hassle for a booker to just invite *some* band ("Sad but true" — Metallica). The bands that I do hear about side-stepping their local scene most often, are bands whose members have lots of contacts in other places, have toured extensively as other bands already, and will probably be well received wherever they end up because of it. Instead of the general eye-rolling that happens for bands trying to insta-tour as newbies, this sort of band usually receives far more criticism for the decision. They might just have different motivations for starting a new band though, and hopefully are contributors to the local scene in other ways. Touring for fun, going on vacation, seeing old friends, and playing music is a great thing to get to do, and it is up to the next town, and not us, to decide what is worth their time and resources.

Punk problems? We've all got 'em. I know I do! Text to 510-585-HELP. Send in email form to: askmrr@mail.com.

futures
and
pasts
*erika elizabeth

I'd been feeling exceedingly down on life in Portland lately (for starters: rapidly generating luxury apartment buildings and the accompanying spikes in rent for everyone else; the proliferation of "artisanal" everything), which is as good as a reason as any to get the fuck out of town for a while—perspective, etc. I spent the first two-thirds of my life living in Houston, my partner lived in Austin for a spell, and neither of us had been back to Texas in a few years, so we doubled up and made a long weekend out of visiting our former haunts. Highlights: all of the amazing scores resulting from a marathon circuit of most of Houston and Austin's record stores; the Vietnamese food in Houston that I miss so much that it almost (*almost*) makes me want to move back there; getting to see my friend Bucky, who sold me a good chunk of my punk records in high school and whom I hadn't seen since I left Houston in 2005; and my friend Jessica, who took the opposite path from me and moved to Houston from the Pacific Northwest a few years ago. Lowlights: the t-shirt I spotted with outlines of Texas juxtaposed into the radio waves on cover of *Unknown Pleasures* (this Joy Division appropriation thing has really gone too far, y'all); driving in Houston for the first time in a decade and remembering the sheer hell of highways with eighteen lanes of traffic; being reminded of all the scary right-wing and/or religious merchandise available at rural Texas gas stations. The longer I've been away from Houston, the more I've come to appreciate some of its redeeming qualities that I overlooked or couldn't acknowledge when I actually lived there because I was too busy being miserable and hating everything, which are the same types of complicated feelings that I'm trying to fend off in Portland now that I'm back here.

On that note, there have been a couple of things to come out of Portland recently that haven't completely bummed me out. I caught the OINTMENT on one of those stereotypically Pacific Northwestern quasi-goth, dark-punk bills that I've gotten so burned out on, and since I knew nothing about them before I saw their set (their internet presence was basically non-existent), I'll be an asshole and admit that my expectations were low. They put me in my place pretty quickly, though. I can't remember the last time that an unknown band wound up completely and unexpectedly blowing me away like that, but it definitely doesn't happen very often now that there's such an extensive digital information loop out there. And speaking of the digital information loop, the OINTMENT still don't have any real internet presence, aside from the new demo that they've made available as a YouTube stream, of all things. Pure weirdo synth-punk precision, closer to the mechanical DEVO ideal than the theatrical SCREAMERS one, but with an underlying, bottled-up intensity threatening to pop at any moment. The thing clocks in at a lean eight and a half minutes total and it's all killer, no filler, but "Nothin' Today" and "Mr. Baker" in particular manage to be as insistently catchy and absolutely off-kilter as anything from all of the modern-day, synth-armed Australian gangs collectively clutching their CHROME records to their hearts (y'know—TOTAL CONTROL, AUSMUTEANTS, insert your own favorite here). Get their tape from Baby's World (babysworld.storeenvy.com)

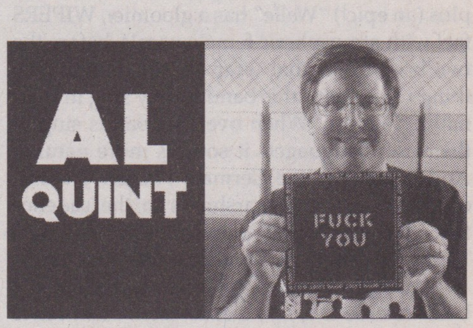
Sometimes you need someone who lives halfway across the country to tip you off to cool things currently happening in your own backyard, so I was especially grateful to the ever-amazing Osa Atoe for suggesting that I check out LITHICS, who not only are from Portland, but also cite PYLON and the FALL as two of their primary influences, which begs some important questions—namely, "how did this band escape my radar?" and, "how am I not actually *in* this band?" Their seven-song demo cassette is basically the stuff of my post-punk dreams, with needles-and-pins guitar lines jabbing and competing for space with minimalist, meditative bass/drums synchronization and coolly detached female vocals that drift somewhere between the twin inspirations of Alison Statton of YOUNG MARBLE GIANTS and Vanessa Briscoe of the aforementioned PYLON. Throw in some hair-raising, neo-no wave scratches and scrapes of six-string across the otherwise steady and taut rhythmic throb of "Lizard" and "Seven People," and you've got a band who should be making all the weirdo art-punk kids drooling over that CCTV single similarly lose their shit, if they know what's good for them. Limited to 50 copies, so act quickly lest everyone starts to get bored with Northwest Indiana! (lithics.bandcamp.com)

I had a total blast playing bass in an all-female BUZZCOCKS cover band for Halloween last year with two of my favorite ladies in Portland, which made the fact that I wasn't able to get my shit together in time to make a different cover band happen in 2015 all the more disappointing. Meanwhile, my friend and erstwhile Buzzcunts drummer, Fiona, started a new project called TOP DOWN, whose debut EP *Silver Ashes* was mixed, produced and recorded to reel-to-reel in mono by none other than Fred Cole himself—not too bad for a self-proclaimed "summer band." His influence is all over their take on economical, lo-fi garage-punk, from bassist, Chuck Struggler's ragged vocals cut with that telltale Fred Cole quivering edge of desperation (particularly on the gloomy, mid-tempo "Rocks to My Head"), to the way guitarist, Szim totally nails the bluesy, flipped-out tone that's so quintessentially DEAD MOON, and with the two of them trading off at the microphone, the Fred and Toody parallels are particularly striking. Yeah, the DEAD MOON meters are kind of off the charts on this thing, but as they say, "good artists borrow; great artists steal," so TOP DOWN should more capably than fill any DEAD MOON-shaped holes you might have in your life these days. The physical version of the 7" is due shortly, but you can run counter to the whole prevailing aesthetic of Cole and company and dig into the digital version as we speak. (topdown-pdx.bandcamp.com)

Melbourne, Australia's TERRIBLE TRUTHS have been relatively quiet for the past couple of years after a cluster of singles that appeared in 2011/2012, and a handful of tracks from those EPs have just been given a new life on their self-titled debut LP out now on drummer Joe Alexander's Bedroom Suck label. There's a stark tension between the alternating and intertwined vocals from guitarist Rani Rose and bassist Stacey Wilson and the band's late '70s/early-'80s post-punk-styled clang and clatter, like warm breath suspended as vapor in frigid cold air. "Don Juan" makes its third (!) appearance on a TERRIBLE TRUTHS, combining a pulsating bassline, some staccato guitar and bright, nearly New Wave-tinted harmonies that wouldn't have been out of place in the MO-DETTES catalog, while LP-exclusive tracks like "False Hope" and "See Straight" seem to come from a much darker place, splitting the difference between reverb/chorus-heavy SIOUXSIE AND THE BANSHEES-style drama and the knotted angularity of contemporary (yet classically-minded) post-punks like TRASH KIT or SHOPPING. Hopefully it won't take them another three years to bring out a new batch of songs, but if it does, it'll still probably be worth the wait. (Bedroom Suck, bedroomsuckrecords.com, terribletruths.bandcamp.com)

"The World of Punk is Actually Really Small" file: Sometime back in the spring, I had stumbled upon this 1983 single from an upstate New York band called the DEGRADS that one power pop blog or another that I occasionally browse had posted. I wound up putting the snotty, class of '77-indebted B-side ("I Saw Bobbie Sobbing in the Lobby") on my radio show/podcast thing, and got a message a few days later from my friend Jonathan thanking me for playing it—as it turns out, he had been their front person, which I had somehow completely missed despite having watched footage of them playing a very local access-looking TV program in Rochester right before the 7" came out (let this be a lesson to everyone that you never know which of your friends and neighbors could have been semi-secretly responsible for knocking out subterranean DIY gold 30 years ago). Now here we are a few months later, and there's a brand new DEGRADS compilation LP courtesy of the French label Cameleon that collects both sides of their lone 45, plus eight previously unreleased tracks drawn from tapes of home recordings that the band did before they splintered in 1984. While there's an obvious BUZZCOCKS influence present in the single's balance of punk sneer, pure pop hooks and smart-assed lyrical wordplay, the archival material takes cues from a whole spectrum of late-'60s to early-'80s underground noise—the SWELL MAPS' freewheeling UK DIY messthetic guiding the lo-fi punk bash of "What's My Problem," the thread of primitive proto-punk running from the VELVET UNDERGROUND to the MODERN LOVERS that gets picked up on organ-accented rave-up "Don't Listen to Rock and Roll," or the post-punk paranoia of "Transposable DNA" (if "I Saw Bobbie Sobbing in the Lobby" is *Singles Going Steady*, this one is MAGAZINES's *Secondhand Daylight*). And they pull it all off! (Cameleon, cameleonrecords.bandcamp.com)

Send me letters and music! Analog: Erika Elizabeth / 2545 E. Burnside Street #203 / Portland, OR 97214 / USA; digital: ripitupstartagain@gmail.com. Radio shows for your listening enjoyment: expresswaytoyrskull.com.



CATCHING UP ON THE BACKLOG...

Just music this month. Considering I could fill pages ranting about the latest racist or Islamophobic comments from any one of the members of the Republican Klown Kult* running for President (*credit to radio host Johnny Angel Wendell, who played in the Boston band THRILLS back in the day) and 'cause myself (and many of you) to get a migraine, it's probably better to provide a respite from real life and just focus on the punk rock.

EASTERN BLOC is new MA band with 3/5 of DRY HUMP, plus Christian Pedro from SOCIAL CIRCKLE on vocals and they've just released a five-song demo. Unlike DRY HUMP's twin guitar attack, there's only one of 'em here. It sounds a bit more stripped down and Brian Herrmann's bass is given more prominence in the mix. Loud, fast and ripping hardcore, slowing it down for the stomping "The Mask." Doing it right. Good debut. (noscapegoatnosurvivors@gmail.com)

London band SNOB's second self-titled 7" features four more bits of punk bile. A dense sound with razor-sharp guitar riffs and a thick, thumping bottom end. Two songs about hating work, one about litter bugs (with the great title "Litter Lout") and one ("Death Erection") about, well, I'm not exactly sure. The lyrics are done in a more or less conversational style i.e. these aren't sing-along anthems. Dark and bristling. Hope they make it over here someday. (snoblondon.bandcamp.com)

USA NAILS aren't from the US but also from London and their second album *No Pleasure* has a sound that'll nail your head to the floor, if I'm allowed to use an old "Piranha Brothers" reference. Loud and heavy music with huge, ominous riffing that creates a powerful swarm from the outset. They bring in some spacey effects for the lengthy "They'd Name An Age," add a burst of speed on "Laugh It Up" and "I Cannot Drink Enough" (also working in some spacey sounds) while "Automated Cyst" takes a lumbering JESUS LIZARD-ish post-punk turn. A dark and menacing concoction and something you'll want to play at a high volume. (Smalltown America, smalltownamerica.co.uk)

After three 7" EPs, German band MÜLLTÜTE have released a self-titled 12". Fast and basic hardcore with a trebly guitar sound à la AMDI PETERSENS ARME, to name one band. Short, sharp songs done in no-nonsense fashion, although the three-minute-plus (an epic!) "Welle" has a gloomier, WIPERS feel with atmospheric female vocals, before the two brief blasts that wrap up the album. One thing I like about this band is they sing in their native German. When overseas bands sing in their own languages, it sounds more natural. And languages like German, Finnish, Danish, etc., have a certain harshness in the cadence that give the overall sound more of an edge. That's the case here. (muetue@heartfirst.net)

Staying in Europe, Spanish band SUDOR's latest release is a 12", *Enamorado De La Muerte Juvenil*. Despite the fact this full-priced 12" clocks in at just a shade under thirteen minutes, I don't really feel like I've been ripped off here and will stop complaining. For now. A punk smorgasbord encompassing thrash, D-beat and more melodic Spanish touches, particularly for "Algo en Su Cabeza Hizo Crack." Sure, "De Madrid a La Vinagra" steals DISCHARGE's "Decontrol" riff and "Mesuena a Mierda Tu Grupo de Punk" sounds like a faster version of that band's "Protest and Survive" but there's a winning catchiness throughout and energy to spare. (Todo Destruido, tododestruido.blogspot.com)

On their first 12" release (on Toxic State), NYC's LA MISMA draw from the musical well of that label's and Katorga Works bands—buzzing and pressing ahead at a steady but not-too-slow clip, adding post-punk touches on some of the songs A pealing and stinging guitar sound, underpinned by sturdy and versatile bass lines and drumming, along with high pitched vocals from Nay that are a combination of abrasive and endearing. They do slow it down for each side's closer, "Martiz e Vidro" and "Afirmação," with stick-in-head melodies emerging from each. There's the usual quality packaging, coming with a booklet that has English translations for the Portuguese lyrics and a full-sized poster. A strong effort. (katorgaworks.bigcartel.com/category/toxic-state/Euro pressing on La Vida Es Un Mus, lavidaesunmus.com)

When I took the record out of the sleeve for URANIUM CLUB's *Human Exploration* 12", I thought I had the wrong one, as the record labels said it was an album by PENCIL called *Not Pen*. I was all set to email the distro that I got it from before discovering a note inside the cover saying there had been a minor mix-up at the pressing plant in the Czech Republic. Wise-asses...And there's some wise-assery and cheekiness running through this band's debut vinyl. An offbeat, jabbing sound that occasionally brings EDDY CURRENT SUPPRESSION RING to mind, i.e. a collision of garage-inspired rock with '77 WIRE-y impulses given a modern polish and occasional bracing, hard-charging bursts of punk energy. The lyrics are cheeky but in a dark way—a sinister undertow to what might be a stalker tale for "The Collector" or the murder ballad of "The Misadventures Of Prissy Chrissy." An appealing brashness throughout. Vocalist Brendan Wells is also in SOLID ATTITUDE and they dished out the same kind of snotty swill so you might want to look into that band, as well. (Fashionable Idiots, fashionableidiots.blogspot.com)

NIGHT BIRDS' latest album, *Mutiny At Muscle Beach*, maintains the West Coast via New Jersey punk sound but there's not as much of the surf-y guitar. It does show up here and there but the sound is tougher, starting with the hardcore speed of opening song "(I'm) Wired," which careens straight into the ADOLESCENTS-sounding "Life Is Not Amusement For Me." The love for horror movies and TV are part of the lyrical content but it's in the context of facing life's struggles. "The Golden Age of TV," for instance, prefers "getting lost in fictional worlds" to watching cable news—maybe it's meant to be tongue in cheek but, truth be told, these days I'd rather watch the football game or a movie most nights than CNN. CJ Ramone pops up to lend backing vocals and, of course, a "1-2-3-4" for the driving and tuneful "Off The Grid" and there's also a cover of a somewhat obscure KINKS song (I didn't know it) called "King Kong," given a rockin' rendition. There's a hyper feel throughout and Brian Gorsgner's vocals fall into that description, as well. A spirited album that doesn't rely on just one songwriting approach. (Fat, fatwreck.com)

In the reissue department, Dischord have unleashed YOUTH BRIGADE's first demo on a 7". I've had this on a bootleg 12" (backed with MINOR THREAT's demo) since the early '00s and like it just as much as their *Possible* EP. If you need a history lesson, vocalist Nathan Strejcek was in the TEEN IDLES and when that band split, this band formed with a much meaner, beefier sound. Not as thrashed-out as SOA or MINOR THREAT, instead taking a pummeling mid-to-fast route and songs like "Bouncer," the anti-military "Snow Job" and "Last World" (which ended up on "Flex Your Head") hit you like a fist to the face. It all does, in fact. Eight songs, four of which weren't re-recorded later on. The sound of agitated teenagers at the dawn of the Reagan era. Dischord continues to do a great job emptying the vaults and the packaging is top-notch. Essential. (3819 Beecher St. NW, Washington, DC 10008, dischord.com)

The demo tapes on my desk have been piling up lately and I'm finally starting to make a dent in them. I recently got a huge package from the Buffalo label More Power Tapes (morepowertapes.bandcamp.com). There's plenty going on up in that neck of the woods. Not every one of them is an artistic triumph or anything I'm particularly into but here's a rundown...

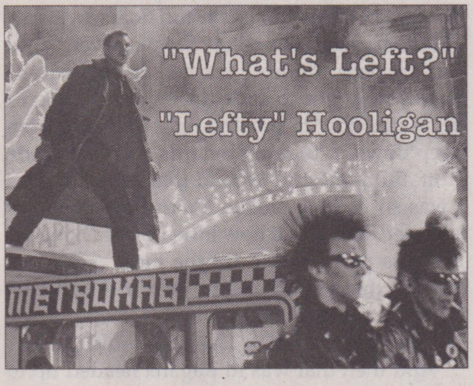
FACILITY MEN's third demo plies more hard-edged post-punk rock that has a '90s vibe. Sharp, angular guitar riffs and sturdy bass-lines come to fore, particularly on "Parading," The band formed out of the ashes of the late, great PLATES (their album "Salvation Morning" is well-worth checking out). Vocalist Teodor Lazar's bray (think JJ from the OFFENDERS) soars over the intricate and energetic arrangements. This is the best-sounding recording to date for these guys. Hope we'll see vinyl at some point.

BLOBS, a band with Biff, who must have played in dozens of bands at this point (BROWN SUGAR, PLATES, BAD PEOPLE, I OBJECT, AARON & THE BURRS, to name some of 'em), have already released a pair of demos, a self-titled one and "Shame." They operate in a similar vein as BROWN SUGAR, mixing up hardcore with garagier and psych touches (particularly in the guitar playing), along with Amelia's against-the-grain vocals. Both have solid tracks although I prefer the first. "Shame" introduces sax and keyboards into the mix and it doesn't always work. Playing up the rock side a bit more and they're clearly moving into different regions, which isn't 100% appealing.

KHARLOS is a band, not a person, a band with three guys, two guitars, keyboards, drums and no bass. On their eight-song tape *Don't Think About Dying At My Party*, things get off to a very promising start with the psych/garage/rock of "Dreams" but the fired-up nature of that song isn't really maintained after that. A collection of snappy and tuneful songs that are listenable but not anything that grabs you by the throat, not even the cover of SWEET's "Little Willy."

CRUELSTER are actually from Cleveland and have a number of releases under their belt. The tape on this label is titled *First Demo 2006* but it was recorded in 2015, if that makes any sense. Fun, dumb punk, a little cleaner-sounding (?) than on the more raw-sounding fodder of their other output (including a newer 7"). Hard not to smile at a song called "Dumb Fuck" and there's a winningly obnoxious nature to it. There's plenty more swill on their bandcamp page (cruelster.bandcamp.com).

Al Quint, PO Box 43, Peabody, MA 01960; subvox82@gmail.com; subvox.blogspot.com; sonicoverload.net



Tales of Capitalism

Pascal Rigo is a baker and an entrepreneur, a French citizen who moved to the United States and became an American. After opening a bakery in Los Angeles, he moved to San Francisco and started a French-based bakery called La Boulangerie on Pine Street. The concept as well as the food was a success with locals when Rigo opened a café/restaurant nearby called La Boulange, then another and another, until he had a small chain of 23 food establishments around the Bay Area (and one in LA). As his empire grew, Rigo partnered with other restaurateurs and investors to start up or buy out local restaurants, coffee houses, even another confection-oriented baking chain.

Now, having vacationed in Paris a number of times, I'd grade his La Boulange effort a C+/B-. The Franco-American fair was decent, meaning above average for the Bay Area and below average for Paris. Rigo had managed to capture a semblance of the Parisian sidewalk café experience without succumbing to the excesses of Bay Area coffee house laptop culture, with many of his stores becoming popular neighborhood hangouts. But as his economic empire grew, a less benign side to La Boulange surfaced. Rigo managed to sidestep or finesse most of the City's rules against chain store proliferation as a local chain with a lot of clout. Yet toward the end of La Boulange's rapid expansion, plans for prospective stores met with increasing neighborhood resistance, as when West Portal residents unsuccessfully opposed the closing of a local grocery store to make way for yet another La Boulange. As the La Boulange chain grew, baking shifted from the Pine Street bakery to a South San Francisco factory, which meant standardizing the product and reducing its quality.

There was grumbling in the Bay Area over the chain's precipitous growth, but Rigo's business success generated national corporate interest. Starbucks bought out the La Boulange chain for $100 million, gave Rigo a VP position, and integrated a selection of Rigo's bakery items into Starbucks coffee shops, all announced on June 4, 2012. That meant more local grumbling, even some anger and fear, as quality continued to decline and Starbucks' intentions became clear. It was an old-style *faux* friendly corporate takeover strategy where the corporation taking over strips away all the important assets from the taken over corporation before discarding what remains. Starbucks had all of Rigo's recipes, so they claimed they could no longer afford to operate a parallel chain of restaurants and announced Starbucks was closing the entire La Boulange chain by the end of September, 2015.

Hundreds of people lost their jobs as a consequence of Starbucks' corporate shell game, and in the end nothing could be done. Capitalism does not respond well to the hard power of the working class expressed in labor agitation, organizing and strikes. The soft consumer power of "voting with your dollars" through economic campaigns, targeted shopping and boycotts often gets a more conciliatory response.

The Bay Area's angry reaction to Starbucks' move filled the newspapers, blogosphere and airwaves for weeks after the announcement, causing the coffee giant concern for its reputation, its customer base and above all its bottom line. And Rigo, always the savvy businessman, saw a golden opportunity. He and Starbucks negotiated a deal by which Rigo agreed to take back his original Pine Street bakery and five of the most popular La Boulange store locations as La Boulangerie de San Francisco on September 25, 2015, thereby preventing tech money from installing chic high-end restaurants in their place, diffusing any potential consumer revolt for Starbucks, and making Rigo into a local hero of sorts.

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This modest tale of capitalism is not intended to elevate some element of capitalism (markets, value, wage labor, the commodity, valorization) to centrality, even though I'm fond of chapter one of the first volume of Marx's *Capital*. Nor will I argue over whether capitalism is an open system (per conventional Marxism) or a closed system (*a la* Marxist Value Theory), even though I consider a closed model to be an abomination before the big G (Gödel). Nor am I saying that small-scale capitalism is preferable to corporate capitalism or that government regulation should favor the former over the later. We live in a capitalist society within a capitalist world order, and continuous economic expansion is the only abiding reality of capitalism. The consequences of capitalist growth-without-end are increasing social misery, economic inequality and ecological destruction. Small-scale mom-and-pop or individual entrepreneurial capitalism inevitably becomes large-scale corporate and monopolistic capitalism. Yet there is a popular preference—whether ill-advised or enlightened—for small shopkeeper capitalism over large corporate capitalism as being somehow fairer, more equitable and less environmentally damaging. I myself enjoy a lively farmer's market, in San Francisco or Paris, to the sterility of a supermarket any day anywhere, despite my economic fatalism. So, here are a few recommendations for socially responsible capitalist products or small-scale capitalist businesses to patronize:

The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution (movie): This favorable yet even-handed history of the Black Panther Party in the 1960s by documentary filmmaker Stanley Nelson is a treat not just for nostalgic scenes of Oakland and cameo appearances by 60s celebrities. It's also a powerful if cursory discussion of the triumphs and failures of the Party in general and individual Party members in particular which concludes with a searing indictment of J. Edgar Hoover, the FBI, and their state-sponsored Cointelpro campaign to disrupt and destroy the Panthers. Fred Hampton's assassination by Chicago police was only one of many government "liquidations" of Black radicals intended to prevent the rise of a "Negro messiah." This might still be playing in movie theaters when this column hits print, but it will be available in DVD/streaming/download formats soon enough. (theblackpanthers.com)

Jacobin (magazine): The latest attempt to found "a leading voice of the American left, offering socialist perspectives on politics, economics, and culture." Available in print edition or pdf download, *Jacobin* began with charting the death of liberalism and continues to offer quasi-radical socialist alternatives. Despite the bloodthirsty extremism implied by its name in honor of the Jacobin Clubs of the French 1789 Revolution and their unremitting reign of revolutionary terror, the magazine's solutions rarely go beyond the social democratic let alone democratic socialist. The layout and graphics are surprisingly stodgy and there is no letters section, lively or otherwise. Their business model, in shunning advertising for a solid subscription base intended to fund the magazine, is sound and theoretically sustaining. I'm a subscriber. (Jacobin, 388 Atlantic Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11217/jacobinmag.com)

Arizmendi Bakery (worker-owned cooperative): A market economy based on producer and consumer cooperatives has been touted as a variation on capitalism, perhaps an alternative to capitalism, that avoids the excesses of capitalism proper. I've never found this analysis compelling, but I do enjoy a delicious chocolate thingy from Arizmendi Bakery. This is a thriving chain of six worker-run coop bakeries, plus the East Bay Cheese Board, that keeps the ideals of a coop economy alive. And just try asking an Arizmendi worker where to find the tip jar. Inspired by the Bay Area's OG coop Rainbow Grocery, Arizmendi belongs to the Network of Bay Area Worker Cooperatives (NoBAWC) which has some thirty member workers cooperatives. (arizmendi.coop, nobawk.org)

The Green Arcade (bookstore): An individually owned and operated bookstore in downtown San Francisco, this narrow space is crammed floor-to-ceiling with progressive-to-radical books, periodicals, pamphlets, calendars, and ephemera. Despite its location in the City's bleak Hub neighborhood, the questionable viability of books and bookstores, and the vagaries of leftist politics generally, The Green Arcade has been open for seven years now. It sponsors community and political events, often in the McRosky Mattress Company building across the street. And it offers to locate hard-to-find items for customers as well as other bookstore services like gift cards and online ordering. Sweet. (The Green Arcade, 1680 Market Street @ Gough, San Francisco CA 94102, (415) 431-6800/thegreenarcade.com)

Again, this is not offered as part of any comprehensive, radical critique of capitalism, but as suggestions for capitalist businesses and products that can make our lives a bit less harassed and a tad more enjoyable. For any true critique of capitalism, I still recommend starting with volume one of Marx's *Capital*. (Copy editing by K Raketz.)

PERSONAL PROPAGANDA... My first novel End Time *(AK Press, POB 40682, SF, CA 94140-0682), or* Fim *in Portuguese (Conrad Editora, R. Maracaí, 185, Aclimação, 01534-030, São Paulo-SP, Brasil), is out of print. My second novel is in the works. I'm archiving past columns, and publishing current ones on my political blog, www.leftyhooligan.wordpress.com. My personal blog is www.gamatiasz.wordpress.com. I can be contacted at hooligentsia@icloud.com.*

i don't think that i need to sit here with you fucking dildos any more

by Imogen Binnie

Correspondences / Ragana Tour Diary Part Three of Three

I was on a panel at the Olympia zine fair a couple months ago where Vale from *RE/Search Publications* was talking about how back in the day in San Francisco punk was this thing that couldn't be sold—it couldn't be coopted because it was too…I don't know, I forget what he said. Something about how hippies would draw paisley all over their jeans and then the next season the jeans companies would be selling pre-paisleyed jeans, but punk was about wearing black and being a dirtbag? Or something?

You know punk, *Maximum*. You know we live in a toxic garbage culture whose whole thing is taking real stuff, gobbling it up, defanging it, and then selling it back to us. We've talked about it. I only bring it up again because I've been thinking about it—and about my response, which was something like, "well punk finally sold out permanently in the '90s and I guess a lot of people made a lot of money, although also it doesn't seem like *all* of punk sold out as much as that it cracked in half, with one half being about Blink-182's inevitable-in-retrospect *Nightmare Before Christmas* Hot Topic goth era, but the other half being, like, greywater systems and herbalism." And I want to believe that those things couldn't be coopted by the Blob—but I'm not naive enough to believe anything is sacred or safe.

You can buy bulk calendula at Whole Foods.

Anyway, I think where we left off last column was that we'd just played in a basement in Boston where we all failed to be grim metal dudes by having a lot of fun on a trampoline, and one of the people who lived at the house where the show was happening got too stoked while Ragana was playing and sprayed beer all over them. And then afterward we got to hang out with Matthew from Discipline and talk about being punx past thirty which is a conversation I pretty much always want to have.

So.

After Boston there was a show in Providence, which ruled because Providence rules and there are so many awesome weirdos doing weird stuff there, and we got to play with Leather Daddy and Exit Order from Boston, who are Real Punk Bands and who totally slayed. But that show kinda sucked, too, because like everything in Providence it happened in the middle of the fucking night and I was exhausted—Punx Past Thirty—and Emily's amp was kind of messed up and too quiet, which meant we sort of played lullaby versions of our songs? Which was fine, too, everybody knows that this doom/sludge stuff is just a bunch of pleasant music played really loud with a lot of distortion so that it can sound tough.

Ragana, of course, slayed. But I think Correspondences might've kinda sucked, even though we played by candlelight. But who cares!

The next night was our last show with Ragana at the Flywheel in one of the Hamptons. I forget which one. I mean, the Massachusetts Hamptons, not the Long Island ones. The lesbian Hamptons. Not the rich people Hamptons.

The Flywheel is a funny place to play a show because it looks like a giant town hall or something, this multiple-storied official-looking edifice. And my girlfriend showed up while we were hanging out on the steps before the show, because we only live like an hour away from there! And she brought me one of those fancy Whole Foods green chia drinks that cost like four bucks, which I was super stoked about because I had Tour Belly, but it exploded all over my face and clothes the second I opened it. It was like a fucking local, organic bomb. That stuff was in my hair and all over the steps but whatever, eventually we set up and got to play and can I tell you something?

The sound in that space was so good! Like *so* good. Sam, who does the sound there, fucking rules at doing sound.

And I'm not gonna lie to you, *Maximum*. We fucking ruled at playing occult sludge/doom that night, too.

I don't sing much in Correspondences but I do some black metal/crust stuff hoarse whisper ghost singing in this song "Frost Heaves." And I'm an herb, dude. I learned from youtube videos how not to fuck up my voice when I do it, like how to breathe right and sing from deep down within my innards and that kinda stuff. But honestly? We did that song last, and I was so fucking stoked about how good we sounded, and about how little I was fucking up my bass parts, that I did the most rock'n'roll bullshit thing of all and pushed it until I hurt my voice pretty good.

Whatever. Worth it. That show ruled.

And then that was it! Ragana headed up to Canada, Lee and Emily drove back to Emily's place in Providence, and I went home with my girlfriend to sleep in my own bed for a night.

Now let me tell you about the last show of this little tour, which took place the next night.

Correspondences started when we were all living in Portland, Maine, and we played there a bunch of times while we all lived in town; then, when before we all moved away, we played this farewell show/record release party for a 7 1/2" (we play too slow to keep it to seven) where we got to decorate the space with a bunch of moons and Christmas lights and sticks and canvas and then invite six friends to be a terrifying wit eath chorus and sing with us. We were the only band at that show and we still managed to fill up the space! Hella people came out and there were not enough records, although that might have been fine because they ended up sounding like shit. But still! My point is that the weirdos in Portland, Maine, rule, and have been really good to us, so we were stoked for our last show on this little tour to happen there, even if Ragana couldn't be there.

And dude. Portland, Maine, fucking came through for us again.

Since we left town, this art collective/collaborative space/bunch of weirdos started a space called New Fruit which I think is mostly studios although they also have stuff there sometimes, and one of the stuffs they decided to host was this Correspondences show.

So okay. Picture a relatively small room, maybe, I dunno, twenty feet by forty feet? Now imagine, against the middle of one of the long walls, a triangular structure pointing toward the middle of the room, just big enough to fit a band of three people under. Now imagine there are all these long-stemmed dried flowers strung up along the length of that whole wall, densely, and that the triangle room thing has a drop ceiling stuffed till it's about to pop with enormous dried out flowers hanging from it. Imagine that there are lace curtains hanging down enclosing the triangle room so you can sort of see that there's a band in there, trying not to giggle, as you come into the space.

Half stacks are outside the little room against the wall on either side.

Up along the edge of the outside of the ceiling of the little room there's all this yarn that's been dyed black. Like a fucking ton of yarn, this medusa monstrosity, and at each of the points of the triangle there's a weirdo whose face has been painted in terrifying black and white to look like it's got hella eyes, or cracks all over it—y'know, scary but not corpsepaint. And they've got all this long, dyed black yarn hair that's tangled up from their heads and into the yarn all along the roof of the lace curtain room. There's unnerving ambient music that sounds kind of like thumping and chewing playing and then eventually these creeps they start spooling away from the little room, hair pulling taught to the beams it's anchored to. Then they start cutting their hair with scissors, disentangling themselves completely, and then they start to roll up the curtain.

And there is us! Wearing the same clothes we've been wearing for a week, still trying not to laugh at the fact that we didn't do *shit* and we still get to be at the center of this sick elaborate art thing.

We've only been playing three songs a night on this tour, because one of them is fifteen minutes long, but because no other bands were playing this show with us, earlier that afternoon we'd checked to see if we remembered how to play any other ones. And we mostly did! So we ended up playing for like half an hour or forty minutes.

This was a good way to end a tour, even if Ragana wasn't there.

And I've been thinking: could something like this get gobbled up by the blob and sold back to us? Could Justin Bieber coopt this kind of thing? I mean, we made some money, but mostly we just gave it to Lee because she was the band member designated this tour to stress out about missing work and specifically about needing the money that you get from going to work. But I mean. It's not like we turned a profit this tour. Plus, I think looking at it on an individual level is kinda bullshit—never mind what you're buying or selling, in these web 3.0 times. It's what you're building—and who you're building it— that's bigger than yourselves. And on top of just being a sick, creepy, perfect and weird show that definitely confronted masculinist norms about what makes a cool show (tough guys banging into each other, technical proficiency, anger), there were also so many people there who were women and/or trans and/or queer and/or down. You know?

Of course Justin Bieber could steal this. But I don't think the question is "how can we keep Justin Bieber from stealing our shit" as much as it is "how do we build things that are for us, not for Justin Bieber." And this show did not feel like it was for Justin Bieber.

Another question that came up at that panel in Olympia was about what young trans people can do to change mainstream culture for the better, and my answer was something like, "I dunno man, mainstream culture is toxic and I don't think a half hour radical politics show on Comedy Central or something is really gonna fix that. I think we need to focus on supporting each other and living outside toxicity as best we can—and learning to have each other's backs. Especially the backs of people who have different experiences of oppression than our own." And I'm not trying to be all maudlin while I wrap up this tour diary or anything, but honestly, after a few hours when everybody had cleared out of the space and our band was going to sleep on the floor, still being stupid about alternative rock from the '90s and eating slices of dollar store (sea) weed, I felt like we got to be a part of something bigger than the three of us.

We were like a mile away from where this band started, when we were eating like two pies between the three of us once a week at band practice and Lee's dog would get so bored of us playing that she would go to sleep on the floor right in the middle of our little human triangle. We haven't blown up rich or famous or anything, but we have been part of building this thing we get to be a part of which is for us and for our friends and for the people we care about. Which I would even be willing to share with Justin Bieber, if he embraces greywater systems and herbalism! But which, right now, is not for Justin Bieber.

That is powerful, dude. That rules.

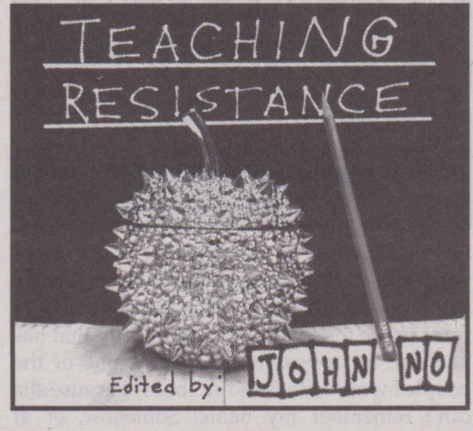
ENDNOTES:

1) It still blows my mind that Blink-182 went *Nightmare Before Christmas* goth. At Girls Rock Camp this year I had a girl in bass class who was already really good at playing bass, so on the last day I shut the fuck up and let her teach class, and the song she chose to teach the class was from Hot Topic Goth Era Blink-182. She's like 15. She was 5 when that album came out. I had Twisted Sister and she has Blink-182.

2) I put some cell phone videos of Ragana at the Flywheel up on youtube if you want to see it.

3) Check out New Fruit if you're in New England. They do a lot of sick stuff.

4) A lot of the lesbians in the Massachusetts Hamptons are, of course, rich.



October and early November are generally considered the most intense portion of the school year for teachers and students alike, particularly in the United States. This time period is characterized by an excess of standardized tests, midterms, and heavy front-loading of class materials that will be referenced for the remainder of the school year (to which there is no end in sight). There are very few breaks or holidays, so everyone is stressed and under-rested. So, in commemoration of this "stress month" in school, there will be no guest entry for Teaching Resistance this issue. We will get back to our regular revolving author format next month. Below, John No, Teaching Resistance editor, shares some thoughts on a current education-related issue that you might want to look more deeply into if you are a radical educator, student, or just someone interested in what happens (and why) in our schools.

Just about everyone in the U.S., and probably much of the world, has seen the video of a Black, female student in a South Carolina high school being beaten and dragged from her seat by a white cop who works at the school. The reason for this abuse of the student's civil and human rights has been cited as her being "disruptive" by refusing to relinquish her cell phone to the teacher, then refusing an order to leave class with the cop. The student's removal by force was welcomed and approved of by the teacher and school administration.

While this individual case is thoroughly and obviously fucked on about ten thousand levels, it is far from isolated, and undocumented versions of incidents like this happen to young Black and brown students on a daily basis in many public schools across the United States. The core problem is racism, and there are specific structures of racist/white supremacist oppression embedded in modern public school disciplinary procedures that guarantee this situation will endlessly repeat itself unless things fundamentally change, from the institutional level to one-on-one communications in the classroom.

Let's get started with the obvious: Cops do not belong in schools, period. In fact, as radical educators (particularly in schools with high proportions of socioeconomically disadvantaged students of color), we should be doing everything in our power to insulate and protect our students from contact with police and the punitive, oppressive institutions they represent. Just about any contact with police becomes inevitably toxic for these students, begins a downward cycle into the modern slavery of incarceration, and often ends up being fatal. If we do nothing, the school-to-prison pipeline will only widen and suck more young Black and brown people into its hungry maw.

Obviously, structural racism has been a constant in our institutions (including the schools), but how did we get to the specific, hyper-punitive point we are at? When did schools just become just an extension of the police state? Cops are only posted to active duty in urban (and low-income suburban) schools because of a lingering "law and order"-promoting Faustian bargain made between mainstream liberals and conservatives dating back to the '80s and early '90s. This was a time when the drug war and middle-class hysteria about teenage gang violence were at a fever pitch. Highly-punitive, often racist legal approaches—mandatory minimum sentencing, increased criminalization of drug addicts, disparate law enforcement/sentencing for crack vs. powder cocaine, heightened profiling and mass round-ups of black and brown "gang members", privatization of prisons, etc.—created a hostile new legal environment with dozens of nasty traps set primarily to ensnare young people of color.

During the peak of this hysteria, teens were widely tried in court as adults for the first time, setting the stage for entire lifetimes of total marginalization and slave-labor exploitation (yes, prison labor is slavery). Schools filled their halls with cops, metal detectors, and "zero tolerance" policies that resulted in countless arrests over minor (primarily drug-based) infractions, despite the fact that the vast majority of serious violence between students, particularly that involving weapons, occurred off-campus and away from the purview of these campus cops. Meanwhile, the gangs, which often provided the most potent social cohesion and sense of empowerment that many poor students of color had, eventually came to a state of relative peace with each other and ceased open warfare in most major U.S. regions (with a few notable exceptions).

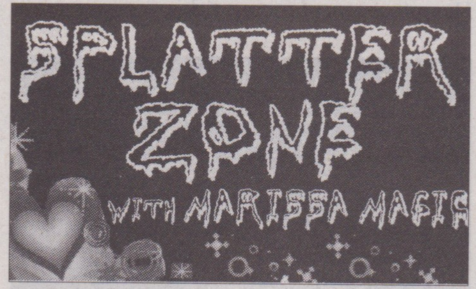
This slowdown in organized gang violence combined with grassroots community building efforts, macroeconomic changes, and other factors to drastically reduce street violence in impacted communities. The decrease in overall violence in and around these communities was either ignored by policymakers or erroneously credited to an increasingly militarized police presence and "zero tolerance" policies (including longer-term incarceration of young teens), which served mainly to increase tensions and make things markedly worse in many ways. Experts on the subject tend to agree that the constant presence of cops in urban and low-income suburban schools had little or no positive effect on those particular environments, and the involvement of law enforcement in many non-serious on-campus infractions has in fact had a very distinct negative impact that is reflected in a vast increase in the lifelong criminalization of young black and brown people (*Na and Gottfriedson 2011, Heitzig 2009, etc.*). We now must wrangle with the multigenerational fallout from this unprecedented widening of the school-to-prison pipeline.

Meanwhile, highly-publicized mass school shootings in rural areas and exurbs (well-off, predominantly white suburbs) like Columbine contributed to a lingering public acceptance for continuing and even increasing the armed police presence in urban (and low-income suburban) public schools. This is despite the fact that these heinous mass shootings were almost exclusively perpetrated by young white males and took (and still take) place in schools with predominantly white populations—schools which rarely have any consistent police presence on campus.

Fear and racial prejudice continue to drive support for punitive approaches in schools today, from parents, administrators, politicians, and others. Sadly, these approaches are also supported by many teachers, who have either bought into white-supremacist narratives, have been bamboozled by harsh "discipline" policies that just make us into cops ourselves, or are simply overwhelmed and poorly-trained in deescalation, empathetic communication, and restorative justice techniques. With countless resources available for these non-punitive techniques online, in print, and through direct training seminars, teachers and counselors should not only familiarize themselves thoroughly with them but be ready to openly agitate and fight for their implementation and full support at the district level and higher.

As teachers, *we* need to push for a paradigm shift in schools. We need to leave behind the lazy cop out of oppressive violence we perpetrate by pushing the big, shiny red panic button and call police in to handle problems that could be handled in a better way. We need to get rid of the cops in our classrooms *and* in our heads. We need to fight to change the entire system from a punitive model to a healing/restorative model, and we need to say *cops out of our schools*!

The Teaching Resistance column is designed to provide a platform for radical, punk-affiliated, subversive teachers/educators to share their ideas and draw attention to important issues around education; particularly compulsory and community-based education. If you are a teacher (anywhere in the world) for students of primary or secondary school ages (K-12), community colleges, or alternative learning arrangements such as collectivist free schools, and you want to submit an idea for a column, please write an email to teachingresistance@gmail.com. There is also an archive for this column which can be found online at teachingresistancearchive.blogspot.com.



I'm working full-time for the first time in eight years and it's kind of brutal. For some reason, they made me the boss. When someone says, "I want to see the manager," I'm the guy that has to make an appearance. Literally, one of the people I work with calls me "boss" because she can't remember my name. Somehow, or at some point, in the hiring process they moved from referring to it as "library tech" to "senior library tech." I dress like a square and I'm kind of under-qualified. It's a temp contract and the woman that I'm taking the job over from seems to think I'm an idiot and talks shit about me to the people I'm supposed to be the boss of (ugh). No one tells me what my job entails and then treats me like I'm incompetent because I don't know what my job is. I've been tossed in a pit of shit. The woman seemed nice, initially, but is being a control freak and not letting go of her job. So, I'm left to figure it out. I think I'm supposed to be a library cop and I have no interest in being an authority figure. I work in the library of a community college. These kids are here to learn and so I'm going to let them take a library-use-only book, leave the library, and go across the hall to make some copies, because all the copiers in the library are broken. Whatever. I judge those who uphold policies no matter what.

Once in St. Louis, we were playing a show at a coffee shop and there was this band of teenage girls that sounded like flying lizards. They had one song where the chorus was just "you don't have to be a Nazi about the policy." Now, I'm the boss and am supposed to stick to policy. This one tiny chunk of song just constantly bounces through my head.

I asked this woman, whose job I'm supposed to be doing, exactly what my job is supposed to be and she asked me what my career aspirations were. In my head, I thought about two weeks ago. I was floating in the Pacific Ocean on a beach in Maui. I was eating cool food. I was waking up early and sitting on the deck and reading a book. I was hiking through forests and eating fruit off trees. My hair was constantly gilded in salt. I was thinking about how I hadn't worked in months. I was working, but it was work like making weird videos, large paintings, and repetitive drawings for various art shows. I was making complex meals. I was thinking about how my career goal is to work as little as possible, to live far away from people, and to make yard sculptures in the Pacific Northwest.

I changed the subject. In my adult jobs people are baffled by the notion of not wanting to work, so I avoid talking about it. Don't you want a car? Everybody wants a car!

I can handle sitting at a desk all day with nothing to do. I just sit here, write bullshit, and then call it a column or a zine. The authority-thing is weird and uncomfortable. Somehow, the gnarliest aspect, the gut-wrenching part, falls during the commute. It's crushing to be travelling in a wave of people who are tired, stressed, and headed somewhere they don't really want to be. At night, everyone just wants to get the fuck home. It's like the anchovies in *Spongebob Squarepants*. Everyone wants to go home, drink, and watch cable. The last time I worked full-time was the point where I understood cable television. Even when a job is not mentally taxing, still, somehow, you get home with the desire to tune out—and not in a cool way. There was a time at some other responsible adult job, when I wore sneakers and brought adult shoes in a bag that I would change into at the office. This action felt the most like joining the rat race or whatever, relinquishing my outsider card.

I was sitting at the circulation desk and some middle-aged man was yelling at me about unfairness or something. I didn't get upset which was surprising, because usually I'm such an easy cry. I told him to lower his voice and fuck off without saying fuck off. I definitely did say, "Sir, you need to lower your voice" while making a "lower your voice" hand gesture. My friend, Judy, who is another freak with an adult job, once told me about some position where she worked at a front desk and frequently utilized the "one moment" finger. It's weird to have this control. It's weird to be the top person that can shut some shit down. It's cool to able to tell rude people to fuck off though. I guess? This is the most adult I've ever been. I have an office so I ordered an "I want to believe" poster. I was saying that maybe I wouldn't put it up because my coworkers might think I'm a wingnut. He said, "They know, they already know."

They can see in my eyes that I couldn't sleep, I surrendered at 1:00 a.m., and rolled out of bed cooking pizza rolls alone on a cast iron skillet. Does grilling pizza rolls make me pathetic or a genius? If my pizza is enclosed I prefer a calzone or a hot pocket; pizza rolls are predictably disappointing.

They *know*. They fucking *know*.

I keep thinking about Hawaii: floating in the water, ultimate leisure, and recreating. Everyone left to go shopping and I was alone on the deck. The breeze was soft and I leaned back in this hanging egg chair. As the chair softly bobbed and weaved, I felt slightly sick. I thought about the water, about being afraid of ducking under the waves, of letting go into disorientation, and a possible loss of footing, the lack of grounding, of some kind of solidness, or a level of control. Was I about to cry or throw up?

VIKTOR
VARGYAI
AWKWARD
RAGING

My reality is made up of damaged fragments. I did not ask to understand history day by day even just a bit better, but beside the cruel realization, it's devastatingly boring to witness the repetitive ritual of humans and power pairing together to waltz sanity and humanity into the ground. How those who preach about love, peace and forgiveness just spread hate with spit, and how those needy of help are whipped by tyrants drunk on power. Still we breathe, buy bread, go to the post office, write recipes and watch movies. After all, whose crisis is it when the main event that happened is that our safe and boring lives have to face solidarity that has to shine from our side? My favorite Hungarian writer—a man whose books have formed my thinking and changed my life—is battling with cancer. European culture is in danger, but by cancer cells not Muslims with smart phones. I walk the streets with a feeling that something cruel is about to happen, and I'm ashamed because I still just want to talk about music.*

Music is not the most important subject for me, nor is it a field I could be more useful in than others (what else is it then? If nothing else, I'm just as useful anywhere else as here, thus here I'm the most useful) nor could music solve anything. But it somehow restores a bit of order in the world if I write about sounds in a fanzine that is based on a musical genre. Magazines lie, books lie less. Whenever I open a book, I read about music. You are reading a magazine now so, if you want to learn more about the world, at least read better magazines and forget the charming disbelief that the most sense you can ever encounter is either in basements between two one-and-a-half minute songs, or in a badly paginated lyrics sheets.

If you care about a special type of punk music you can carry on reading this zine. I would suggest continuing with questions. If you have questions, you will have answers, because even this magazine is filled with them. These times are about searching.

If you have read with enough attention thus far then by now you have all the right to be angry, because I have admitted that I have no clues, only questions. A columnist should at least pretend that they have a clue, since you paid for this magazine that is—aside for the common love of punk—initially written for your money. And since you don't have time to search for something other than reading this zine, it is adequate that you require me to deliver you answers for your questions. But what answer is there to give and what clue is there really to have? I don't know, and I'm sort of bored with all these didactic readers (aka meta-manuals for texts) on how to be punk. I'm on an adventure of cultural journeying, which is better to be taken with questions (discovery) rather than to prove the right of my answers (crusade).

I tend to worry about the name-dropping tendencies I perform here and to improve them I always arrive here with high hopes of finally mentioning some bands that no one knows, but because *I* know them I think it's obvious to everyone else as well (it should be since I do not receive unheard of demos). There are complete scenes I have no idea of, scenes that for millions are as obvious as the daily sunrise. Does it bother me? Of course, because I want to know everything; but I also want this everything to always have unknown parts for me. When you feel that there are no more secrets left for you in punk, then that is the moment you have burned out.

Noise is around me but noise is decreasing inside of me. My favorite writer, the one who now battles with cancer, said that if there is noise in a writer then the writer cannot write a novel, maybe only articles. This isn't even an article; I still have a volume to be lowered, but recently the more chaos surrounds me—and the less I understand of it—the calmer I feel. In these intoxicated times I feel gratitude for people recording their madness.

The biggest difference in how I used to look for yet-unheard-of bands and how I look for them now, is one newly introduced stage in my learning process, where, even though I'm open (probably more so than ever before), I also stop and allow myself to room to judge. I ask myself questions: do I really like this? Are they really succeeding with what they wanted to do? What *did* they want to do? Is this really great? How does it feel to hear this; is it making me happy or making me feel anything other than boredom? If I like it, do I like it because it's likeable, or is it sticking in my brain and doing something there? Is it something that's really what I like? I have a more detailed criteria system I go through every time in my head when I listen to music, or basically consume other people's self-expressing (cultural) creations. I carry around a green notebook full of post-it notes, attached to letters that were written on the back of flyers and received from countries one ocean away from me. I make notes on almost everything. Everything feels a bit creamy as I continue through these days, as if I am being pushed out of a paste tube.

My departing points are very banal, which could indicate obvious destinations. Platforms I found useful are record descriptions at the LVEUM bandcamp page, which is a great channel to learn about new sounds, with the sound-contextualizing descriptions that relate further to earlier bands, scenes, record labels. These mandatory recommendations of Paco's new releases are precise references, and they not only sell me the record or the act of collecting records, but the love of music and the will to dig around deeper. That feeling of slipping quickly into an easily obtained, but very precious, knowledge, aka a power slide to punk heaven. I got the same from a recent radio show with Mystic Inane, and from browsing through the archives of Shit-Fi, a site I found when I wanted to learn about the Situationist International movement and found Bill Brown's column about something that is also referred to in Shit-Fi. Meaning that learning about culture in general could lead me back to treasure fields of punk. To drown myself in the sonic presentation of an idea, to realize the links between cities, countries, scenes and times. These fertile grounds invite me to be engaged and ready. This is not only about concentrating on a direct destination, but concentrating even when I wonder off trail. After all, I don't even know where I will end up, and blessed ignorance makes these listening journeys really adventurous. This is about building a mind palace with reference points and archives that refer to each other.

Although, to know what I want to hear doesn't get the whole job done, because desire doesn't reflexively assign the desired. It helps me state the agenda for the work ahead of me. It gives awareness and reference points to use whenever I encounter anything worth being archived. Still, I have to figure out how to break into the fields of more knowledge, how to crack the rough surface of this everythingness consolidated by apathy, global bad taste, self-erasing memories and elitism. It's about searching and searching as well as possible. How does this band sound; why do I like it; could I find it anywhere else; who influenced this band; who is influenced by them; who were/are their contemporaries; who put them out; where are they from; what's their scene; what's their context? Click, click, browse, browse, ask, ask, want, desire, read, understand, stay hungry. Even if keeping something a secret culture still exists, when I reach these places I find whatever I want. Soon it will turn out I'm nowhere close to any real absolute knowledge and I will become excited again. This is something that is great in punk and seemingly missing from capital letter hardcore. It's a sort of human thing to want to know more. In punk the more obscure a band is, in many cases, the more interesting it sounds, which motivates the exploring and maintains the excitement. This makes the historians of this genre scavengers. In hardcore the best bands are on the surface and the provincial state of that culture leaves no hidden treasures for the knowledge-hungry, thus the precious information is based on such a trivial culture, and the possessiveness is focused on collecting every color of a countable amount of records. While in punk, with maintaining a level of quality, there are millions of interesting bands, as the listeners have a chance to improve their skills and mature their relationship to music. This sort of fandom is closely linked to consuming records in their physical form, while the grails of this scene are rare and very expensive flexis, making the satisfaction either unattainable or the privilege of the bourgeois. I myself, being new to the game, am just dazed by the ability to buy unheard-of records and not fail at it. This is also something that, on the one hand asks for dedication and the ability to handle risks (buying something based on the record cover) and, on the other, could seem as a totally privileged thing. But this helps me make up my mind—like in films, where using actual celluloid that has worth makes you unable to just let the camera roll. My time is at stake here and it is precious. This perspective makes me realizes clues that are (and now I know they have already been) everywhere around me. I see them because I rely on guidance. I know that I don't know thus I seek. I tend to over-mystify this process and, in childish minutes, I sometimes suspect that there is such absolute punk knowledge that makes you not only able to find these hidden, expensive relics, such as a Re Zist flexi, but that with this knowledge you also get them for free. You are allowed then to owe them. Information might be worthy but not this much. Sorry punx.

Things I'm looking for: I have included among my favorite Big Boys songs "Prison" next to "Same Old Blues." Tim Kerr's guitars might be pushed into a more obscure background of the rhythm heavy music that dominates their signature sound, and those un-hum-able twisted squealing disharmonies might not dictate their songs, but they pester my mind with their autonomy instead of their authority. Same goes for Glen Taylor, who made Dicks' sound hysterical, smart, heavy and excitingly dangerous. A complete freak show leaking from behind a blues curtain. Detention in the detail, and I have felt in love with these kind of unobvious guitar sounds that don't paint but color the picture, and without an intrusive, attention-seeking habit they loudly do their work in the background. On one loud night I also found these camouflaged guitars in Just Urbain's "Hospital Bed." It is bewitching to realize this sort of sound mess scrawling up and down on the solid base of the enervate, slow-paced song. It's an interesting idea to let the rhythm section coordinate the path of the song and let the guitars tag along and run around within this huge space that is waiting to be filled with an enchanting cacophony of outsider ideas. These parts are great within their context but if I grab the most interesting part and hold it for myself I can move into other directions. Through my self-introduction to jazz I have learnt that you can either have no idea and play freedom rock (hardcore) or know every rule and play noisy freedom (jazz). It trained me a bit to appreciate weird sounds, and seemingly nonsense forms of communication as they deserve to be grated. Thanks to this I could lift myself down into deeper fields of the American freak hardcore scene that had not ended with United Mutation, the *In a Car* 7" and Deep Wound. Stiff Legged Sheep's failure to play some sort of jazz punk that fortunately turns into vomited up hardcore madness of unreal children is necessary for my world. How the instruments dis- and reappear, the vocals chantingly speak and scream, how weak the whole sound is, which creates a sort of struggle for the band to be heard. But I hear them, I listen closely and I love what I hear. Another band from this artificial scene created by lazy listeners is Cyanamid, who conquer my world with their cynical, transformative sound, that one moment reminds me of Dicks diatribes from the other end of the glory hole, the other it's a transmission of a sheer nervous breakdown. Paranoia and a myriad other mental problems locked together with some raging hardcore songs. This is great and I cannot understand how in the world this band could not be on the same level as the Sex Pistols?

A few weeks ago I spent a short amount of time in a tour van, that is a weird space to listen music to in, since it provides a constant whistling noise as the van tries to speed through resisting air. Sitting within this sealed can of moving feedback, makes hearing anything feel like listening to Billy Bao's *Buildings From Bilbao* LP, where even at home music sounds like you are walking through a busy neighborhood with a walkman playing a worn out tape that you listen through an earphone that has contact problems—everything is transformed, modified and dipped in noise. Within these circumstances hearing Kina's *Nessuno Schema Nella Mia Vita* record was a ridiculous experience, as I tried to figure out what part of it is real and what is a reflection of my imagination that creates something real from this unformed noise? To make the task harder for my mind, I was reading an essay by Péter Nádas on the nonsense of Hungary. I felt like I was high, and probably I was. Thanks to this handicapped environment in which I tried to alienate myself from the boring reality, I again fell in love with music and hearing the unexpected. Reminds me of the circumstances of how I got to know them; which I cannot remember clearly but most likely it was due to some marveling moments on everything. I got everything and it was up to me to decide what I would do with it. I kept carrying on. I skipped to Mobs' *Projection of Astral Body* and wondered what was happening there to the guitars. What could have been the message beyond the chordless notes they played? How could they sound if they were supposed to be happy hymns about glory and they failed to be noisy weirdness? Some questions are meant to be asked but not answered. I went further among the flexi and rare 7" reality and blasted in the van from my mp3 player the Gagize, Re Zist, Lance Lot, Bitousha, Gudon, Nashi records. It is rousing to learn about how many scenes have existed in Japan and how they differ from each other, the land of D-beat and ultra crust had been also a great ground for all these super weird hardcore bands who did things to their guitars that were unknown worships. Here I also hunt for guitar parts. Towards the flexi kingdom I dipped into the riff-heavy discography—core bands work as the Sexual, Sodom and Aburadako. It's immersive to hear how a sound travelled from ultra primitive riffs to Birthday Party-esque industrial-ish post punk hammering. How rudimentary energy dominates the rhythm and when this beat is powerful enough it fills all the space that the songs create for themselves.

By the grace of browsing luck, I have also stumbled into European bands who brightly corrected my empirical concept of the average punk of the continent. Death to all dogmatism, I'm about to live with questions, I'm not interested in answers. I am a local patriot, sort of; maybe I'm rather an equalist, I want perfection to happen everywhere. My latest findings from the Netherlands, Italy, Spain and Scandinavian states were new to my ears, as these bands have stepped out of the beaten path of their local scenes and rather connected into that universal craziness I'm detailing here now. I hunt madness and the expression of confusion, I imagine the platform of creations as a ground that needs everything, so if something is missing I either try to find it or try to create it. These bands did not want to participate in the world of template hardcore, but made music from their own deviations. Über fast, ultra trashy hardcore rising from everywhere, let it be the Netherlands with

Jesus and the Gospel Fuckers, Pandemonium and Murder Inc III or Spain's Anti-dogmatikss, Croatia's Generali, Sweden's E.A.T.E.R., Italy's Declino. But new, not yet historical sounds, are able to transmit the tense incomprehension of bullshit reality. Piñen, la Misma, Piss are bands that I have encountered lately and fit into the puzzle I'm busy solving. It's a constantly sad realization that long gone bands populate my playlists and shelves—except for the obvious physical reason, that everything archived becomes history—but there should be just as many great contemporary bands. It also depresses me that amazing local bands like Önkiírtás will probably never get the sort of attention they deserve. I went to their show after having heard their demo, that at first didn't have too much of an impact on me, but live their show was destroying my world and dropping salt on the ashes of my burnt brain cells. It was heavy, awkward, smart, precise and really fucking noisy. They played hardcore how it should sound, not as the B-side of any record, not as scenes, decades, labels, bands but as fucked up kids going boldly against the world as they break out from their vacuum.

I also want to find pissed off twee music à la Desperate Bicycles, xeroxed covers, collages, political rage and broken hearts. From all around the world. Please help me!

(*) This column was submitted on November 11, 2015. Two days before the tragic events that took place in Paris on November 13. Although the future can't change my thoughts in the past, only in the present, I do not will to re-write what I have submitted. The two events—that is people leaving their countries for the sake of saving their own lives and pervert fanatics killing people for powe—are not connected even if some want the two to be linked. It seems that we are in a bigger crisis than we were two days ago but, as I have suggested in my column regarding learning about new music, I recommend everyone adapt the same method to going through this maze of chaotic events: do it with questions.

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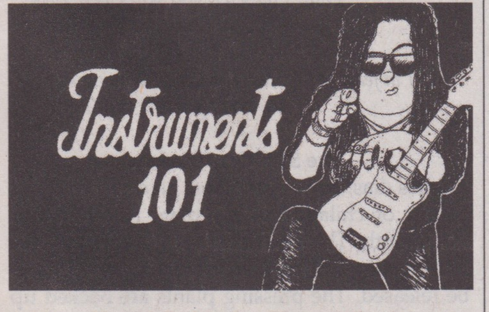

A Very Biased Guide for Those Who Want to Start at Music

I always get a lot of questions from random people about how they could start playing music or start a band and the answer is neither short nor simple, because music is a real thing, and even if you want to perform badly, make poor music, or just noise, it still takes a few skills. Yet, you don't have to learn musicology or be a rock star to make music, and that's the cool side of it.

I often hear, "I want to start a punk band, what is the easiest way?" Well, screaming, or making any noise that sounds like music out of your mouth, is the easiest by any means. I mean, you only need a microphone and you'll only shoot single notes or just sometimes scream. The hardest part is probably writing the lyrics and somehow finding a melody, or musical notes from your throat. If you want to become a good singer, there are not a lot of options. You're either good from the start, and you're very lucky, or you'll have to take a few lessons with another human. Even if you don't, the only way to improve singing is practicing. You have to practice a lot. The throat works as a muscle, and you don't expect a very skinny guy to lift a ton of weight. You have to exercise your voice, yet you still have to preserve it from screaming way too much and breaking it. If I'm really honest, being a decent singer isn't that hard, but being a good one, with good melodies or good lyrics is. It's probably the hardest thing. Also, as the singer, you're perceived as the "band leader" by the audience, even if that is not the truth. You're the one with the microphone and you can speak to the audience, so try not to make a fool of yourself. Usually, what people care about most in music, are the vocals. That's the one thing people get hooked on or disgusted by. Have you ever heard somebody say, "I don't like this band because of the drum tone"? I bet you never have. How many of your friends told you that your favorite band sucks, because they can't stand the vocals? Plenty. If you want some cheap advice, a good band starts with good vocals. Good vocals start with a healthy person that practices with his/her voice a lot.

Bass is near vocals in terms of easiness. In punk or rock music, the bassist duties are very limited, as opposed to other music styles where you can use the bass a lot more. I'm not saying that they are useless; my opinion is very far from that. You can see the bass as the instrument that ties the drums with the guitar. It's kind of a missing link. Without bass, the band will sound weak, but the bass is very subtle to the human ear so it's not all fireworks and flags out. The nice thing about it is that in punk or rock music you can only play bass lines and that will be fine. Bass lines are just one single note on a single string that you play for some time, and then change to the next note, and so it goes. The coolest part is that you pretty much only have to replicate the lowest note that the guitar does. If the guitar player plays a G-chord, you'll play the same G of that chord. If he plays an A, you'll play that same A. Also, you have to follow the drummer by any means. Follow the rhythm, because bass is a rhythm instrument. Practice and practice again with a drummer or a metronome. Your job is to keep it on time along with the drummer, and it's not that easy.

Guitar isn't that difficult either, but it is only about practicing, and practicing a whole lot. Get ready to practice. In order to play some guitar, you need to learn a few basics first. You really need to start with major and minor open chords; they are very popular in folk music. Then you can move to power chords. And then you really need to learn the pentatonic scale and the major scale, which are very useful for soloing. On a side note, you need to learn how to strum a couple of strings together, and then play one string at a time. But it's not that hard, really. Everything is pretty much on the internet nowadays.

Let's face it, playing drums is not easy. You either get it or you don't. I've seen some people sit behind a drum kit and slay it, and some just don't. Once again, practicing a lot is your best option but drums are really loud so it can be a pain for your neighbors. I don't really have any good advice besides finding a friend that can teach you the basic skills of drumming. It's all about the rhythm. Drums are a rhythmic instrument so you have to keep the rhythm going no matter what. It is also a very physical instrument, so prepare yourself for some blood, sweat, and tears. Whatever it takes, it's one of the coolest and most underestimated instruments ever. If you want one more piece of cheap advice, a good rock or punk band starts with an excellent drummer. I've seen a lot of bands that had only a tolerable drummer, but he wouldn't put any life into songs, while a poor band with poor songs along with a very good drummer can instantly make the music a lot better. Trust me, a band is at the level of its drummer.

The most important thing you have to keep in mind if you want to play music is to practice a lot. Practice some existing songs or practice the songs you've written. Take lessons if you can, or ask a friend to show you how it works. Play with other people, look at how they play, what they do, or at least when you go to a gig, try to look at what each member does — you can learn a lot from that. Look at videos, tutorials or anything that can help on the internet, it is usually free and full of resources. Starting a band is also a good way to be a better musician because you have to practice with and you can learn to listen to the other instruments.

It's kind of weird to think that punk means a lot of different things to everybody. Between bands, like let's say the RAMONES and CRUDE, there are huge differences in terms of musical abilities, yet, they both sound good. Let's be honest for a minute, some punk records have been played by some very good musicians. *Feel the Darkness* by POISON IDEA is a good example—it's definitely not a record written by beginners. Does it mean you can't play music then? I don't think so. You don't really have to learn much to play in a punk band. You can even ignore this entire column, just go for it and learn by playing.

All in all, it's great and worth it. If you feel the need to do it, then you should. Just try to make it sound as good as possible. So, go out and start your own band—now!

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ANOTHER
TOKEN
TANTRUM
by
SADIE
SWITCHBLADE

I've gone back and forth many times on whether or not to publish this column, but I decided I should. I think. Fuck, I don't know. It's potentially controversial, and intense for some folks, including me. It's about sexual assault, rape culture, and call-out culture. I can speak from my own lived experience only, and in no way intend to speak for all survivors of sexual assault.

I think that in punk and queer circles we are often too quick to abandon people who have done bad things. We are too eager to mark people as irretrievable, to exile them, to have a boot party and make a new friend in their place. Not because we usually believe that people are either Good or Bad, Safe or Dangerous, but because we are terrified of the social ramifications of being friends with someone who has done fucked up things, or even worse, *being* that someone. We want to distance ourselves from bad behavior because we have been taught that bad behavior is something that only Bad people are capable of, not something that comes to life in Good and Bad people alike. I'm not talking about the truly bad fucking men who rape, abuse, act out of malice, are never accountable, never change, and continue their fucked up shit even after confrontations and interventions. Those people deserve to be run out of town, publicly harassed, beaten with bats, all of it—I am all about vigilante justice in those circumstances. But there are two very common refrains in queer circles that I think we fall back on dangerously: "it's not my job to educate" and "intentions don't matter."

Speaking as a trans woman who has, at different points in her life, lived through incest, been raped in the "legal" definition of the word, been ridiculed and shamed during sex, and who has had her boundaries crossed accidentally *and* crossed others' boundaries accidentally, I think that we have flattened all of these varied experiences into a single, monolithic experience of Sexual Assault. This feels tricky to talk about because people experience different things in very different ways from each other, and I do not want to speak for other survivors or in any way minimize others' experiences. I am very wary of framing this column in such a way that deems some sexual assaults "real" and some not. I can only speak for myself, from my experience, and to other survivors. This is not an invitation for men to sound off or "agree"... this is me trying to create space between survivors for a nuanced discussion about the way we categorize sexual assaults and how that categorization can be problematic.

So, for me, when someone told pre-being-out-as-trans me, in an attempted joke, that I was "too fucking girly" in bed, and didn't stop when I told her I wasn't really into what we were doing, that sucked and made me feel like shit, for sure. That sort of thing happened often and impacted my psyche in horrible ways. But that sort of thing did not feel the same to me as when someone non-consensualy called me a faggot and shoved his dick against my face. They did not feel the same to me as when someone non-consensualy pinned me to the ground, choked me, and got herself off telling me "you fucking like it faggot" while I was so drunk and confused I couldn't speak or move. They did not feel the same to me as the sexual assaults I experienced as a child from a family member. When the person who called me "too fucking girly" in bed apologized to me years later in a way that was genuine and heartfelt, that meant a lot to me. We all grow up in the Toxic Hellworld and are shaped by it against our knowledge and will into harmful people. Nobody has good models for how to treat each other, nobody learns about consent in school. Most of us spend large swaths of our lives unlearning and healing from lessons we learned along the way during the first fifteen or so years. Sweet, well-intentioned people with good hearts do fucked up things. And if we refuse to believe that people who do fucked up things can be good people—good people in a really tangible and meaningful way—then we fail at protecting each other from sexual assault because we only look for the threat in people we deem evil.

Maybe for me my hang-ups with forgiveness, intention and growth spring from the fact that the first person to sexually abused me in my life was someone who I loved, who loved me, and who all these years later I continue to love. This person has demonstrated remorse, has shown up for me emotionally, in a raw, honest way, unmoored from ego and denial. We have a complicated relationship, because harm caused in error is still harm. But I think this person has been accountable and that he truly didn't understand at the time the lasting power of the damage he inflicted on me. I really believe that if I hadn't been invested in him and hadn't been compassionate, hadn't struggled to hold different truths simultaneously, that I would have suffered, he would have suffered, and moreover the other people in his life he will continue to meet would have suffered down the line. He wouldn't have grown and I would have had a much more prolonged and difficult healing process.

When we banish people who have abused, we don't really banish them. We can't—it's not possible, even when we wish it were. People who are told they are worthless are not going to change, they are going to seek out people who won't be critically invested in them and won't challenge them to be better. Of course it is not the survivor's job to educate their abuser. But if we, as survivors, want to limit the harm someone can cause to others, it doesn't make sense to me to exile them to a world where no one challenges them on their behavior. They will just get worse. I know that "accountability" often feels mythical, rare, difficult, hard to pin down, but I think when we don't attempt to see the humanity in someone who has done a fucked up thing, we lose a part of our own humanity. That sounds kind of liberal but it's true, I think. Of course, if we give someone another chance and they prove themselves to be irretrievable...bring on the baseball bats. No question. But I want an approach that allows for love, nuance, empathy and compassion for some perpetrators, as well as the anger and rage, and while still creating and holding space for survivors and prioritizing their needs. When we give up on people too quickly, and enforce in them that they are inherently bad, what motivation will they have to try to be good? If good is framed as something that we are telling them they are incapable of being, what will they do next?

Write me: smashitdead@gmail.com.

TURBO
&
GANG
STILL THE NEW BREED

"I'm dressed right for a beach fight,
But I just can't explain
Why that uncertain feeling is still
Here in my brain."
— The Who, "Cut My Hair"

"Hey mug, look the other way
Hey mug, you've had your day
Die your hair day-glo, go and look a prat
Didn't they tell you skins were back?"
— Cockney Rejects, "Subculture"

"I'm fed up; it's why I'm actin' like the old me."
— Young Jeezy on "Fed Up"

The Sun Gets Bloody

Buenos días, borracho brains! Like a five-pound platter of chilaquiles, our plate runneth over this month. The year is wrapping up and, like 2014, a couple of anticipated records have yet to be released. The pressing plants are backed up and a few vinyl-only albums (AGGRO GANG, HAMMER AND THE NAILS, HAWKINS THUGS?) might not make it in under the wire. A shame, no doubt, but on the bright side it keeps us excited for 2016 (beyond a Trump presidency, of course). Now, like a hungover dump truck let's dig in!

First up is the...er...Hard mods of HARD LEFT. Their new LP, *We Are Hard Left,* is out on the band's own Future Perfect Records. I'm not blown away by this album. My beef is mainly directed at content; such as the overuse of the word "comrade." These dudes and dudettes are on the faaaaaaar left (get the name?). Like, I'm sure this shit is being played muzak-style in Lenin's mausoleum as I type. The recording is a bit tinny with vocals way up front (better to hear the lyrics I guess) and at times seems like something thrown together. Aside from my political bias and double standard for left-leaning skinhead stuff, (they sing about skins too), the record and sentiment will surely be enjoyed by fans of the STRIKE from Boston and Copenhagen's the MOVEMENT, both fellow red-mods, and even those who enjoy the EX and CHUMBAWAMBA project, ANTIDOTE. HARD LEFT contains members of FIRE PARTY, LUNCHBOX, and BLACK TAMBOURINE, which is a letdown to know because they sound *nothing* like any of those bands. Such is life!

HARD LEFT is probably a fan of the next band. The long-running LOS FASTIDIOS, who have a new CDEP out on Kob Records, titled...sigh...*So Rude, So Lovely.* It's a skarazy exskartion into what is basically third wave, like MUSTARD PLUG, skinhead reggae. It's mostly boring and "skarivative." *So Rude, So Lovely,* is not a departure for LOS FASTIDIOS. The CD is made up of eight tracks, three of which are new. Regretfully, the two best songs on the EP are their take on the anti-fascist ballad, "Bella Ciao" and "La Mia Vita", a song that showed up on the 2014 release, *Let's Do It*. It's a solid song and has made it onto a few tapes for friends.

The bottom line is this: Members of the Gang don't want to be pandered to. And, as with run-of-the-mill "nationalist" Oi! played by and aimed at the lowest common denominators in our scene, lefty "anti-fascist" ska/Oi!, is unimaginative and does nothing to advance Oi! or skinhead music. Bands like LOS FASTIDIOS only keep things mired in some revisionist and romantic idea of what it was like in '60s Britain, which seems to amount to black and white skinheads, mods and rude boys, skanking to blue beat and high-fiving in racial harmony. They paint an idyllic picture of a skinhead jamboree that just looks tacky in the twenty-first century. But, if you like skinhead-cosplay and pretending its 1968, this Red Stripe's for you, soul brother.

Next up is a solid blast from the past: SOLDIER 76 from Fresno, California is back! In 1999, the band released both an EP and LP on Vulture Rock, *Power It Up* and *Balance of Armour*, respectively. Both are great examples of where American-Oi! was at towards the end of the century. That same year they called it quits, leaving behind an unreleased demo for a proposed second LP. Thankfully, they reformed this year, 2015, and immediately remastered the demo into the mini-LP, *Survival*, released on the band's own 76 Records. That brings us to the EP that is currently spinning on my stereo right now: *Fighters of the Revolution*. It is SOLDIER 76's first new material in fourteen years and the band hasn't missed a beat! You get four songs of patriotic and proud Westcoast Oi! "This is America, this is our soil! / The land where our forefathers died / We won't give up, we won't give an inch / We don't believe your government lies!" That's from "Our Home." This EP is out on Crowd Control Media and Last Punk Rockers, and is limited to 50. Absurd, but glad I got one. Coming out later in November, is another EP that is limited to 25, which leads me to believe both will be collected or incorporated into something bigger for 2016. Whatever it is, we here at Gang HQ can't wait and are glad the San Joaquin Valley is back on the Oi! map.

The next two pieces of vinyl we got in the mail were probably the most anticipated all month. Both are out on Une Vie Pour Rien and are 2015 top-ten contenders. First to the gallows is newest and meanest from the snarling, gnashing bummer that is OUTREAU. You should know this band. If you like what CONCRETE or BATTLE RUINS are doing you'll want to hear this. Take a ride on this fantastic voyage: "At the bottom of the social ladder, to them I'm only meat / They enjoy to play with, while I try to make end's meat / I can't go back / I've been out there for eternity, will I ever escape this reality?!" When he says he can't go back, you believe him. I'm gonna go out on a limb here: OUTREAU shares a couple similarities with METALLICA—I'm talkin' first four albums. Un: The lyrics of OUTREAU's songs are complex and tell a story, but there is a vagueness that is intriguing, similar to METALLICA's early output (the *Master of Puppets* album comes to mind.) Deux: Fredo, the singer doesn't sound like James Hetfield all the time, but there are times his throaty growl resembles the Destructor from Downey's snarl. And, trois: There is an overarching gloominess to OUTREAU that METALLICA mastered, and was one of their biggest aspects that set them apart from other bands in their genre, for me anyways. Serious Oi! right here. I'm curious if a band like OUTREAU could keep up the ambiance for a full LP of new material. Time will tell.

The second piece from UVPR is *La Force Dans La Oi! Vol. 2.* This installment has another four bands representing the top of the crop in French Oi! You've got SYNDROME 81, TRAITRE, RIXE and OUTREAU. TRAITRE is the only band I was unfamiliar with, but I'll be looking for more from them as their song, "Traîner" is dark-Oi! plodder that prowls along the shadows with an angular guitar lead that makes me think of bleak UK bands like ATTAK or ANTISOCIAL. As they are wont to do, SYNDROME 81 bring their brand of chill-inducing BLITZ homage to their song, "Contre Vents Et Marées." RIXE start off the flip-side with a total-tom/bass bludgeoner, and what sounds like the whole band shouting, "Attirer l'attention! Attiser les tensions!" Draw attention, inflame tensions! OUTREAU close up shop with "Spirit", the only English-language song on the record. It's an ode to friendship that ends with these lines: "I don't know how much I owe them / Without them where the hell would I be?" Great! This is a perfect little comp. All the bands complement each other, without anyone over shining or any obvious winners and losers. Tip-top. Completely recommended.

We'll close out the column with the final HARD SKIN release, "The One That Got Away" b/w "The Bovver Boys Don't Bother Anymore" on Ben Corrigan's label, JT Classics. This sounds like HARDSKIN.

Until next month, that's all folks! Ears!

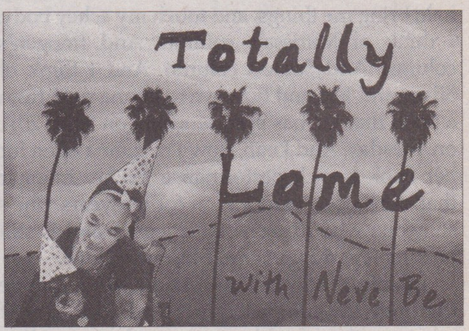
ENDNOTES:

1) Send me any info you have on Central Valley Oi! bands to AmericanBootGang@Gmail.com

2) It hasn't happened yet, but Take This Bird and Shove It fest was a blast. I'm sure Patriot will bring the house down and all those Philly boot boys are gonna see some action, and conquer the city like General Patton. Oi!

3) It also hasn't happened yet, but I'm sure Christmas was...Interesting. It's hard to be 33 and call your partner's dad Mr. _____, instead of by his first name. Even though you've had dinner with him multiple times. I'm constantly being given opportunities to deflate my ego. Thanks Mr. ______.

4) Just think about this: Bill Clinton back in the White House...Yeah!



It's that time of year again. A time when I'm usually blood-surging in love, violently ill, and spending my time writing things that are potentially neither funny nor moving, in between watching sinister television. Even in Oakland it's cold, or colder than we'd like it. But it still won't rain for very long. Well, I won't jinx that. In the Bay Area, any surprise weather pattern (as in weather) is distressing. In late fall, I always find myself laughing and or crying, torn between moving my body a lot or lying still and ceasing moving forever, and contemplating the meaning of things in an oddly retrospective way which will probably be boring by the time I'm actually old and deserve a retrospective.

Speaking of the meaning of things, am I the only person who does not understand tampon applicators? They are supposed to help you right? But with my gimpy hands, applicators end up being the least assistive device possible. It's like when I'm trying to go through a door, and someone decides to hold it for me, which would be nice if it were a wide door which would fit both of us, or if they would hold the door open with their hand while standing away from it. But, often leg walkies decide to hold the door open with their whole body, while standing in between me and the door, like they are not only holding it for me, they are also protecting me from it. Then as I try to go through, I am forced to run over both of their feet as a thank you. Then we both just feel weird. I don't think the applicator has any feelings in the matter, but it's not helping is what I'm saying. That's just some wasted plastic. And even though I thought a deal at Walgreens would make me feel better, I'm just mad I didn't go to a crunchy place and get the tampons that aren't playing that I can just put right up there myself.

Sometimes too, in November, when I'm absorbing some "art" that is both scary and sad, when I'm going to sleep at 11:00 a.m. after vomiting all night and waking up at 6:00 p.m., when the day before I got this gut sick I was still in bed writing all day because I do not have a desk in my room and there isn't really room for one but also I can't afford one...I think, "This is depressing." But I go into the kitchen and run into people I love and something makes me laugh. There's juice and there's tea, and gossip. And now they're sick too. My boyfriend calls me every night after going out and tells me how things were. At first I cry because I am not with him having fun, but I also cry because he is the sort of person who wouldn't go out at all, who would love to watch scary TV with me, hold my hair, bring me things, and touch my achey body. I think of Marissa's column. And Imogen's column. And Sadie's column. And I think of Silver and Jez, and how we're gonna read from a book that Jez has been working on since 2011 on Tuesday. And Leah, how I'm gonna open for her book launch performance for her memoir that she's been working on for ten years. She's someone who already has a legacy and is still making it goddamn, and I wanna follow.

I think of how no one I know has a routine that they are completely satisfied with. But, if you are eating, drinking water, and surrounding yourself with people you love, your life is not pathetic. It's okay to be depressed, but you are not depressing to look at, you're a marvel. I think of how hard I have worked to be where I am. And not in a capitalist-work kind of way, rather in the labor-of-crafting-my-beating, burgeoning-adaptive-personhood kind of way. In truth, this November is not like any other. This is the first November in which I know the kind of love that I deserve. In which I am not prepared to take shit from other people, or from myself. On Tuesday, before the illness bloomed, (I'm trying to be medieval about this shit but really it's a stomach flu and it's okay), I had a massage from my friend, Abby. She's a body genius. The last thing she worked on was my psoas. It didn't hurt my body for her to touch them but it felt strange. On the left side I felt vaguely moved, and then on the right something else happened. I began to weep like after sex or shock. Gently, at first, but then it continued to roll out. I was fucking amazed. She guided my leg down slowly and released my psoas, and everything felt gold. Temple of Midas-Beyoncé's fiftieth birthday-naked angel gold. I felt like I had been given myself to take care of. Presented myself to myself like a gift, like a damn sacred baby. Here, can you? Will you? I said, yes, I will. I will take care of you. Me. And then I had the opportunity to for the next five days. That's not depressing at all.

I think, as a disabled queer anarchist, with unconventional schedules and income, I feel pressure to laugh at myself. I mean, everyone should laugh at themselves a little, but more so, to feel like I am an unfinished project. To view myself as a mess, like many people in the wider, narrower world might. Even with my mood swings and my moments of panic and sadness, I don't. I think I am doing pretty great.

As my friend Eli and I were discussing, adulthood, particularly radical adulthood, can be pretty lonely. Not because you don't have friends or a vibrant gorgeous community, but because there are many times in which you are actually literally alone and cannot totally romanticize being alone. Like when you're vomiting. There are so many ways in which capitalism tells us it's lame to take care of each other or to be around for each other, unless we're getting paid to do so. Often one is left reflecting on the random series of events in one's day, wondering if there are connections. This is why many of us turn to writing. Some others of us wish there was a television show about our lives so we could see what the fuck is going on. Rest assured, you are exceptional, interesting and worthwhile, even if far too few people tell you so on a regular basis. We have to be our own fucking cheerleaders sometimes, especially when we are waiting for our friends to come home from their jobs.

Which is one reason I often cheer for sick days, for self-care days, for plain old lame-crip-gimp-punk-my-body-isn't-working or something days. Days when you watch tons of garbage and think, "Oh, I'll multitask by getting some work done while I am watching this". Then your computer deletes your work every two hours, just to tell you, "*Please stop.*" This is your day. You might think it's shitty now that you haven't been "productive", but you are a genius, and need not prove that to anybody but your other sick disabled friends today. If you feel like I've wasted your time with this column this month, you're welcome, maybe you can complain about it when you're famous.

Accessibility Shoutouts:

Sins Invalid, for continuing the tradition of creating a month-long pay-per-view fundraiser to showcase their amazing filmed, audio described, close-captioned performance, Disability Liberated, an abolitionist disability justice multimedia yawp that just plain rules. I was on one of the panels for it in San Francisco and was consistently blown away by my comrade's/family's brilliance, especially that of co-founders Patty Berne and Leroy Moore. Please check Sins out and just fucking learn something: sinsinvalid.org

The Oakland Metro, for oddly enough having great communication around access, in addition to a very smooth and wheelchair accessible entrance and floor. The bathrooms are also accessible, but secret. You have to ask one of their staff to escort you there, which is annoying, but they're really nice about it and tell you this as soon as you come in the door. I saw G.L.O.S.S. while they were in town along with favorites Composite, and my new favorite, Beast. The whole show made me feel like I was a part of something really awesome, like maybe people felt seeing L7, Spitboy, the Gits, or Bikini Kill for the first time. It was freaky, bright, and brilliant. I was far more starstruck by Sadie than I was prepared for. She has this stage presence and telepathically coherent message that is uncanny and beautiful to behold. I was like, "Oh fucking yeah!" This is for the girls and queers! I'm so down also for everyone wearing more than black or like normie mod-style shit in hardcore bands. All the colors and sass of the evening really got my endorphins pumping in addition to the music that wouldn't quit! I was moshing all night in such a pleasant way that I forgot it was moshing.

Just as G.L.O.S.S. was gearing up, Dax and another person actually came up to me at one point and asked what kind of mosh pit I wanted and I was like, "Oh shit! Let me think about that!" No one has ever asked me that before, but it's a great question. Like, if I wanted to get out of the front and center of things I could have. I didn't want to and felt really safe and supported. To have that kind of thing asked, only added to how stoked I felt! I don't think two people could have actually determined what kind of movement was going to be in the pit, but the illusion and intention was nice either way, and things actually did go the way I wanted them to. People were like trained dancer actors, pushing and shoving, but knowing the mechanics of just how hard to push, when to catch someone, and just how much of your weight to give. It was unprecedented. I don't think I've stayed in that kind of situation for several bands in a row in years and years.

Di! For hosting a really delightful cover band show fundraiser. It was the best. Tiny space that was not the greatest on accessibility other than it being ground level, there's a heinous lip to get over to get in though. Honestly, Di took all of my feedback about how to describe the event access-wise on Facebook, which I so appreciated, and then others chimed in with more details. That's what this kind of thing should look like!!! The bathroom was also randomly accessible to my wheelchair, which surprised me because of the narrow set up with the fridge and the sink. The line-up was really great. I was so into the Wipers and Huggy Bear. I'm sorry, I was late, Princess Mononoke. I truly am. Missing the Cranberries and Bikini Kill was hardly my intention. And Hole?? Did Hole play? Anyway it was a great night. I love Halloween. I had an alligator. I was Madame Medusa and everyone thought that was really random. Everyone seemed to be the most freaking out about Third Eye Blind which is excellent, and also a little embarrassing, but I held lots of people's hands during that which was sweet.

Inaccessibility shoutout: Lots of random bullshit that makes my life hard. Including the Social Security Administration for giving me a panic attack every month with vague and threatening formulaic mail. Other than that, I'm actually pretty stoked on progress you guys! LOL! I did not say that, but here's to figuring our shit out slowly.

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Political sludge metal from Tulsa. Fans of Brainoil, Thou,
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Virgin Flower "Absence of Essence" Tape
The Siege Fire "Dead Refuge" LP
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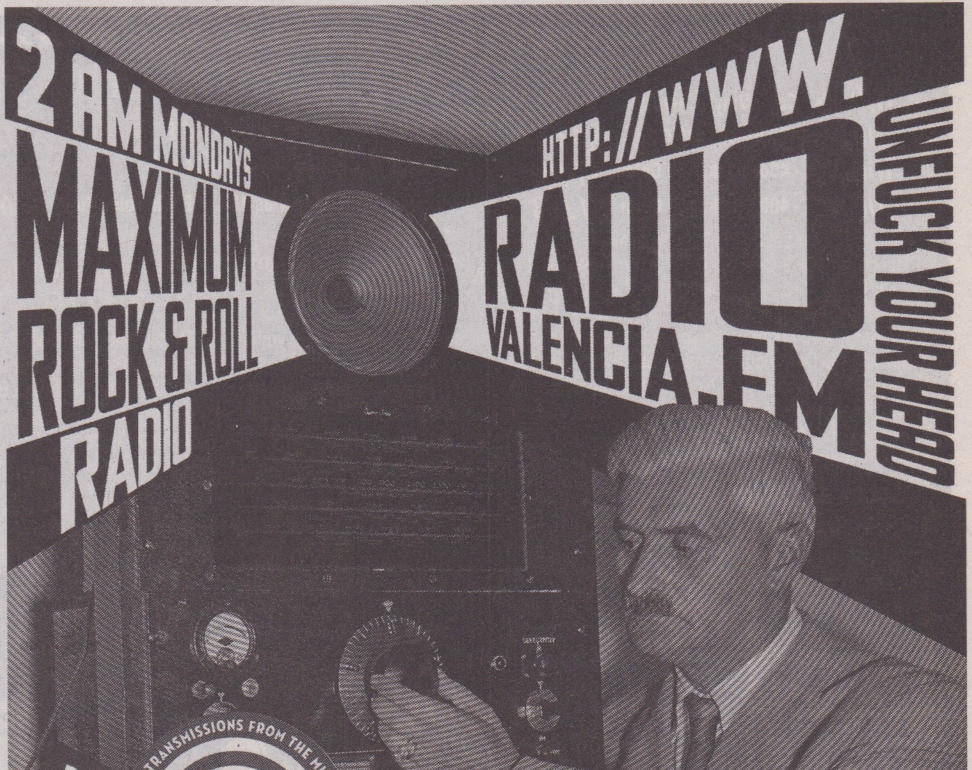

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DICKIE HAMMOND, 1965–2015

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Rebellion Rock Festival 2015 was the last time I saw Dickie. He was drunk as a punk—but then he always was. He hugged me and told me he loved me and asked whether he could get on stage to sing "First Day Angry Song" with Hard Skin. Of course it wasn't a problem—he actually wrote the line "Spent All Day in the Fuckin' Pub 'Cause I'm a Cunt." Well, actually he just said it and I stole it as a lyric. So when Hard Skin play the song, all I can see is a monster of a man trying to climb over the crash barrier and arguing with the bouncers. It's Dickie, of course. It's comedy gold. With Dickie it always ended up as comedy gold.

I know when someone dies, no one ever says anything bad about them, but in Dickie's case I don't think they could. He was funny, infectious, generous, loyal and loving. He had a million catchphrases: Zeus, power, sheeba, son, truncheon. If you ever spent time with him, you ended up copying them. All animals were called sheeba, everyone he met was called son, and anyone with a good Marshall guitar sound was Truncheon.

Dickie played in nearly every band that came out of the North East in the last forty years: Angelic Upstarts and Toy Dolls, as well as Hex, Doctor Bison, Broken Heart Orchestra, Stokoe, Fatty Jones and The Dipsomaniacs. But it's his work with Leatherface for which he will be most fondly remembered. Wat Tyler spent a lot of the '90s touring and playing with Leatherface and my favourite memory is being in Gottingen, Germany and telling Dickie that Rock-O-Rama Records was based in a room in the venue we were playing. Off he went, knocking on the door ready to go mental at the Nazis. It was just another Wat Tyler wind-up but the man was ready to fight the scum.

Dickie, your music will never be forgotten but for those who knew you, your friendship will never be forgotten. You'll be missed by many. So raise your glass to Dickie Hammond—he'll be having a pint and a shot if you are buying!

—Sean Forbes

·blank spell·

If you haven't listened to the Blank Spell 7" yet, put down this zine and do yourself a favor and seek out a copy, even just online. This band is one of the most exciting new groups in Philly not just cause they're fast and weird and fun—and they're definitely all three of those things—but because their interests and influences are so varied. One song might sound like Indigesti and the next more like Part 1 and the one after that might start with a Gun Club riff and end with something a lot closer to Blitz. We sat down with the band recently—Cassidy on vocals and guitar, Aaron on drums, and Jake on bass—over some Chinese food and talked about how being total punk nerds influences their music, what it's like touring Mexico, and how amazing it would be to be the first western punk band to do a Central Asian tour.

Introduction and interview by Yoni Kroll. Photos provided by Tiff Cheng, Cheryl Arent, Diego Bureau, Mauricio Galarza and the band.

MRR: So you've been a band for a year? A year and a half?

CASSIDY: This February will be two years.
JAKE: First show was May.

MRR: And in that span you've put out a demo, a 7", and done two tours.

JAKE: A tour with Latex, a tour with Haldol.
AARON: And then a weekend with Orden Mundial. So three tours.

MRR: When you started the band, did you have an idea of what you wanted to do and has that changed?

CASSIDY: It's definitely changed [but] we haven't turned into a totally different kind of band. When we first started I had made a few guitar parts that didn't really fit into any other bands I was a part of and I even tried jamming them with a few other people and they were, like, "These are weird." They didn't really get it, I guess. And then we were all living together so then we just went down into the basement and played and it was spot on.

MRR: Cassidy and Jake, you've been playing in bands together for about eight years?

JAKE: For longer than that. Since fifth grade.
CASSIDY: Since when we were little babies. Talent show punks!

MRR: Where did Aaron come from?

AARON: I'm from Ottsville, which is 20 minutes north of Doylestown, an hour and a half outside the city. I met Jake and Cassidy coming to a Cloud City show. I saw that Cülo and School Jerks [were playing] —Cülo dropped— but I went to that show because I wanted to check out the bands and I was also trying to find a house to book an Inservibles show at. And lo and behold it's Jim's [Shomo from Holidays/Dark Thoughts] house and we've known each other for years from college. I was just talking to people about Polish punk and shit like that and that's how I met Cassidy.
CASSIDY: Aaron sent us Siekiera and all this shit where I was just, like, "That's awesome."
AARON: Don't forget Disper-Azione and the Italian punk! Do you remember that EP? It's just super chorused out and sick.
CASSIDY: Yeah! It's stuff that I wanted to sound like but didn't really know and could never articulate very well.

MRR: I think that's one of the interesting things about the nature of punk: there's all these different sounds out there and sometimes when you hear something new you might recognize it even if you've never heard it before. That's one thing I appreciate about Blank Spell: you're all really nerdy.

AARON: We definitely take something from everywhere.
CASSIDY: I guess why the music has "changed" [over time] is from listening to a lot of different stuff. But even when we started it wasn't, like, "Let's be an '80s blankcore band that sounds like these three bands."

AARON: It was cool starting a band without a set "We're going to sound like this." It's, like, we have a part that we can make kinda sound like this but make it our own thing. With punk and hardcore it's so easy to just sound like everyone else. You really just have to not put yourself in a box.

MRR: I mean, if you're into jock hardcore then I guess you just want to sound like Agnostic Front. But if you're into interesting music, a lot of the better bands over the years have evolved their sound a lot.

JAKE: It's really important to not stagnate.
CASSIDY: It's like when you make a [new] part [of a song] and I'll be, like, "It doesn't sound like us" but we sound like whatever we make.
AARON: And once you add all the other instruments it just comes together and sounds like us.
CASSIDY: Yeah, if it's us, it's us.

MRR: What are your associations with Philly punk? I feel like there's no real specific sound attached to the city, unlike say Boston or NY or something.

JAKE: There's *Love Songs* and *A Place In The Sun* and other than that it's very forgettable.
AARON: I'm also very into Ruin. *He-Ho* is a very great LP.
CASSIDY: When we first started going to shows I would know of some bands from online but Philly was a lot of older bands and then it was kids who would go to those shows and eventually move to the city and that's who is in the bands now.
AARON: For me I got into Philly punk in and around the couple last years of Pointless Fest and then it kinda stopped after that. By that point Allentown was having plenty of shows and it was closer to my parent's house so I was just going up there. Going to Cloud City was rediscovering Philly punk.

MRR: Were you going to shows at The Pirate's Cove?

AARON: Yeah, Pirate's Cove was the first house I started going to shows at. That place was really sick and definitely super meaningful and relevant in my life. Everybody in the Lehigh Valley scene was super nurturing in just allowing young kids to come in and participate in the scene, which is really great. That's something I've always found very lacking in Philly in comparison.
JAKE: That's a weird thing because Cassidy and I have been the youngest kids at shows and I think we still kinda are. I just turned 22. But since we were 13 we've been the youngest kids at shows, which is weird as hell.

MRR: So you toured Mexico with Haldol but the tour got interrupted by bloody wounds?

CASSIDY: And bad luck.
AARON: It was still definitely worth it.
CASSIDY: I would never want to undo it. It worked out. We'll definitely hit the places we missed in Texas again.

MRR: So why Mexico?

AARON: I just wanted to do it. I had the contacts and friends down there. You know, you can drive into Canada and tour so why not drive into Mexico and tour? We found out later...
JAKE: ...that we shouldn't have done that.
CASSIDY: Next time we fly!
AARON: It's still totally doable to drive.
JAKE: You have to be careful.
CASSIDY: Don't go through Reynosa.
AARON: Yeah. We found out later that it's unheard of for U.S. bands to go drive themselves through Mexico without a Mexican citizen present. It's impossible to navigate Mexico if you don't speak Spanish, so me acting as a translator helped out to get us where we needed to go. But rules of the road, like when you're driving down there—

MRR: There are rules?!

AARON: It took us a good three hours to figure out the flow of traffic and how they handle highways.
CASSIDY: The non-passing lane is just driving on the side.

MRR: I know a lot of bands play one-off shows in Mexico, like the Mob and Hard Skin.

JAKE: That's the thing: you fly down to Mexico City. The show we played in Mexico City was probably my favorite show I've ever played.
AARON: It was crazy. It was totally packed and everyone was super stoked we came [even though] we were six hours late for the show. They added three extra bands to the show to make time for us and then when we got there it was, like, "Go! Go! Go!" We just experienced so much generosity and kindness down there. Everyone is just fucking awesome, they're just the best.
JAKE: And the hospitality that they showed us: making sure that we got what we needed...
AARON: ...and were able to get from place to place and know what we were doing.
JAKE: It was nothing like we've ever experienced in the States.

MRR: Why do you think that is?

AARON: I think that people aren't spoiled down there and you don't take for granted what you have and want to take care of people.
CASSIDY: On the way here we were listening to a tape of a comp of bands from Monterrey and talking about when we played there.
AARON: Grabaciones. It's this really good tape label run out of Monterrey. Everyone was super stoked to have us because they haven't had a lot of touring bands because of the drug war. We played a smaller show because the scene, like, everybody kind of left for Mexico City and it was the last show at this art collective space they were running. Everyone was super into the fact that we came and played and they were so gracious. Everyone took care of us. It was so awesome.

MRR: The band that I always think about when it comes to touring places other people don't go is Total Fucking Destruction from Philly. I remember hearing about how they toured South America

and played a ton of spots no band from the States had ever gone to before. They've also done the same through Northern and Eastern Europe. I was talking to the drummer, Rich Hoak [also of grind legends Brutal Truth], and the way he explained it is that whenever they'd play those shows that everybody in the town would show up, no matter what their tastes in music are.

JAKE: Yeah! Everyone that's ever heard Nirvana is going to be at the show.

MRR: That's just the way things are when it comes to a lot of spots that are less popular on the punk tour circuit.

CASSIDY: Where they could also have the best bands that no-one will ever here!

AARON: Like, we played with this band in Monterrey called Reptoides and they fucking killed it. Hopefully they get recognition but it's probably not going to happen cause of where they're from.

MRR: It is different these days because of Bandcamp and everything else where you can put stuff out there that would never have seen the light of day 20 years ago. On that topic, do you end up sharing a lot of music with each other?

AARON: I'm super big on that. Whenever I find a new band and it sounds like something Cassidy or Jake would be into I make sure I share with you guys.

CASSIDY: It's the kind of thing where we learn how to play one of their songs and we're, like, "Let's change a few notes and we got this!" *[laughs]*

JAKE: It's just so exciting to hear things that are unlike everything that you've heard before.

CASSIDY: Hearing music from places—like when Aaron would play Russian stuff and Yugoslavian stuff—where living there is obviously something we'll never know. I'm not trying to copy that or anything. You're just not going to hear that anywhere else, it's really incredible.

JAKE: I can't imagine living Yanka's life.

AARON: Or being Dezerter in Poland and having to go through state censorship just to release an EP via the state.

CASSIDY: It's so cool because it's just so real. It's not like they were making a band to be, like, "Let's have a band and impress people."

AARON: And it's really fucking good music on top of everything. It holds up to everything in the U.S. but everything in the U.S. is so easy and everything is at your fingertips at all times. There's no real struggle to be in a punk band.

MRR: Punk is also a really accepted thing at this point. I was talking to someone the other day about this tattoo convention that I tabled at for the radio station a few years ago and it was so weird for every single reason but especially cause tattoos are so normal these days that the idea of having a convention as some sort of countercultural event makes no sense. I think the nature of punk as rebellion, when it's no longer considered that, is also weird.

JAKE: It's so easy to find a subculture and latch on to the little bits that you like and custom tailor it to your lifestyle. There's the aesthetic but you don't need the values to have that aesthetic cause no one is going to question you.

It's not necessarily a bad thing but it feels like there's no extreme. Everything is shifting towards this one...it's not mainstream, but it's a mainstream version of alternative.

CASSIDY: That's why I think it's important to have the music not be some formulaic thing.

MRR: How important is it then to take that step outside of society and make that statement that says, "I exist out of the mainstream"?

AARON: For me it's important to do that within punk. Exist within punk but step outside of punk and exist in your right. I exist within the mainstream and I also exist within punk but I am separate from both of those things.

JAKE: With punk the way it is now—just being so accepted–it becomes a reflection of mainstream society but with stupider haircuts.

CASSIDY: It becomes its own microcosm. I try not to be concerned. I like to support the good stuff that's going on but I would never get too caught up in it. It's like getting too caught up in anything.

AARON: There's nothing worse than hearing someone start a new band and it's just, like, "This sounds like this one band." It's just so obvious and blatant.

JAKE: It just becomes a fucking circle jerk.

MRR: Do you think nostalgia is important?

JAKE: I don't think nostalgia is important. I think knowing something about your history is important. I think that nostalgia can very quickly turn into a hole that you can't get yourself out of.
CASSIDY: Nostalgia just feels sour.
JAKE: The notion of nostalgia admits defeat in a sense.
AARON: It's saying you're focused on the past instead of going forward.
JAKE: If you're nostalgic, you're not focusing on what can be done, you're focusing on what has been done.

MRR: I feel that way about a lot of the "reunion" shows where it's an older band just playing for forty-year-olds to relieve their youth and twenty-year-olds who feel like this is a way to get a taste of what was.

AARON: I think that even in your own personal life being nostalgic about what you did before [is problematic.] You have to be active in the moment and do things now.
CASSIDY: Too much nostalgia is just "Live/Laugh/Love," you know.
AARON: There's so many times I've gotten a record off an old dude and he's just, like, "I remember back then!" and it's all this reminiscing starry eyed stuff.

MRR: I think that knowing history is important but falling into that trap of thinking that things used to be better is a problem.

JAKE: It's all the same shit all the time.
AARON: It's not like if any of us were dropped in 1983 wherever we're going to be more stoked on punk.
CASSIDY: That would be so lame and goofy.
JAKE: We would just use our iPhones until the battery runs out.
AARON: And then just be screwed forever.

MRR: So what's next for the band?

CASSIDY: [After Not Dead Yet] we're going to chill on shows and do a lot of new songs and record. I hope to have an LP by the spring.
AARON: Hopefully next year it'll work out to go to the West Coast or Europe. We're working out the dynamics of that at the moment.

MRR: What's your dream destination?

AARON: I would absolutely love to be in the first band to do the first-ever Central Asian punk tour which is so far fetched and probably won't happen until 2050. That would just be the sickest thing.

MRR: Do you have a Mongolia contact? Cause I know a punk there now who is working for an NGO and probably knows some folks.

JAKE: Mongolia seems fucking crazy.

MRR: I mean, Rosetta just did China. Mongolia doesn't seem that far off.

JAKE: Rosetta does some crazy ass shit. I like the people in that band but I don't listen to them that much. But just looking at their tours is fucking sick. Mike posted on Facebook a minute ago asking about contacts in Iran and South Africa.

MRR: They came down to WKDU earlier this year and were talking about how they did an interview for this Iranian zine a while back. Apparently part of the initial message they got said, "Just so you know—no pressure and not trying to be weird—but if the government finds out I'm doing this interview with you I might go to jail for a long time."

AARON: That's insane. Have you heard the *Persian New Waves* comp on Tian An Men 89? It's the first-ever Iranian punk and alternative LP, which was released back in 2004.

MRR: So Blank Spell tours the 'Stans in 2050. And between now and then?

JAKE: I'd like to do Maine or something. [laughs]
CASSIDY: I would like to play more places in the middle of the U.S., like the Dakotas or Mississippi.
AARON: It would be sick to do midwest Canada. Europe would be sick. I would like to be able to tour through Spain and Eastern Europe. Russia would be really, really sick too.

MRR: What you're saying is that you'd like to tour places that aren't normal punk destinations.

JAKE: Those have always been our best shows.
CASSIDY: It's just more interesting than anything.
JAKE: I feel like the biggest surprise we've ever had was when we played Springfield.
CASSIDY: It was set up two days before and we played in a practice space.
JAKE: There were fifty kids there and our merch table got broken in the first two songs cause everyone was slamming.
CASSIDY: It reminded me of on our last tour when we played Birmingham. It was not even in the city, it was just this kid's basement. There were no opening bands even. Someone was filming a music video for a local band down the street and then this pack of kids came and it was sick. It was a great time.
JAKE: Birmingham is great. McAllen too.
AARON: McAllen is a great, great city to play. Everyone should make the effort if they're in Texas to go down to McAllen.

MRR: Why do you think those shows were so much fun?

AARON: In those small towns they get fewers tours. All the bands are great, too.
JAKE: But also if you're going to be a punk in a city like that you have to really want to be there. It's not a place that is the easiest to survive in. In these small towns it's not like you're there because you have a great job or anything. So the people that are there, they fucking give a shit. They're not there just because it looks cool to be there.
CASSIDY: Playing there it's just about the music. There's no other layer or anything thrown on.
AARON: It's totally genuine.
CASSIDY: I'm not trying to be, like, "These are simple places." It's not that at all. I just like the people there. Also you always play with bands that you don't know about through the internet necessarily.

MRR: Last question, cause I know that you're all very involved: what other bands are you currently in?

AARON: I'm also in Haldol. I play drums in both bands.
JAKE: I also play bass in the Drip.
CASSIDY: I play drums in Low Charge, Cape of Bats, and Fragment. That's it.
AARON: Aren't you not in Fragment anymore?
CASSIDY: No, we're going to record. We just take it slow.
JAKE: Ex-members of future members of Fragment.

MRR: As far as bands you're currently in or bands you've been in in the past, what separates Blank Spell from that?

JAKE: Not to sound like a hippie, but Cassidy and Aaron are my two favorite people to play music with and I think as a band this is the best dynamic I've ever been in.
AARON: I definitely agree with that. I think three member bands are pretty sick. If you all click with each other then it's just perfect and you can just really go for it.
CASSIDY: The number of people is nice and we all came together at the same time. I had some guitar parts but it wasn't, like, "Here, listen to this, can you play it? Okay, be in [the band]." It just happened. We can have fun but get shit done. We don't get too caught up in it.
JAKE: I'm never really worried about shit. I'm not stressed out to go on tour or whatever because I know it'll work out.

MRR: We were talking earlier about how you constantly share music with each other and I was wondering if that's also different from past experiences. From my perspective it just seems like you're three good friends who are into the same stuff who are also in a band together.

AARON: That's definitely a good summary of it, for sure. We're all on the same page.
CASSIDY: With other bands it'll just be a little riff at practice and then you make a song and are, like, "Okay, that works." But this is the sort of thing where if it's not good we're really candid about it.
JAKE: We spent 45 minutes right before we came here working on eight bars.
CASSIDY: We'll just jam and be, like, "This sucks" or "I like it" or whatever. We're very open with each other.

MRR: Now it's my turn to try and not sound like too much of a hippie, but it almost seems like what's going on here is much more than just a band. Maybe you should call it the Blank Spell Experience?

JAKE: It is an experience!
AARON: We interact well with each other. We know each other's quirks pretty well.
CASSIDY: It's not like a band where it doesn't exist when you're not practicing or playing a show. We're always in touch and it's on our minds.
JAKE: I know we've all been in bands before when the only times we see each other is for practice or playing a show. It isn't that, which is cool.

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ANDY HUMAN

A few issues back, MRR's own Eli Wald nailed a take on Andy Human and the Reptoids' 2015 album, singling it out as a vital punk statement from a changing, often shitty and strapped, Bay Area scene. It's a startling record for sure, totally mutant-made, confrontational and somewhat of a departure for Mr. Human, a guy who used to be known as plain ol' Andy Jordan (and briefly as Andy Freeze) and noted for his work in several ace bands in recent years, namely Lenz, Buzzer, the Cuts, and Time Flys. I've been a rabid fan of Andy's since seeing the Cuts play in their Lookout! Records debut days and through the years have charted his metamorphosis and obsessed over his recorded output all the while. I met up with him at his regular DJ night at The Night Light in Oakland, Street Waves, where he blasted everything from the Coneheads to Tuxedomoon with equal devotion and fervor. Throughout the evening (and beyond), we talked at inebriated length about perception, motivations and the nuts and bolts of how he became this Human surrounded by Reptoids. My attempts at coaxing a narrative through specific lines of questioning were smartly thwarted by Andy, having the good sense to tell his own story and offer a glimpse at his own philosophy. Interview and introduction by Mitch Cardwell. Photos provided by Mark Murrmann.

Did the decision to start recording as Andy Human begin at the end of Buzzer?
It definitely wasn't before that. I did a bunch of different shit. I'm trying to remember now. The timing is kind of different. In the interim after Time Flys but before Buzzer, I did a recording with Ben Brown (Cuts guitarist), just us two, and it was a song I had that could've been a Cuts song called "The Walking Dead," but was for a project I was calling Andy Human Childe. That's the first real Andy Human recording. The Cuts actually played it a few times.

That's never been released, right?
No, no, that's never come out. It's actually a pretty good song though. Garrett (Cuts drummer) still talks about it sometimes. He wants to record these lost Cuts songs. I think that would be something, but I'm a little bit removed from that reality. But that song is actually the beginning of Andy Human. The name Andy Human actually came from my friends calling me that. It's some inside joke that they all had about me.

Like you weren't able to relate to other human beings?
More like I was especially susceptible to human vices! They were just making fun of me. Somehow it stuck, for better or worse. The first batch of proper recordings as Andy Human actually happened because I had moved back into my mom's house in East Oakland and I had nothing to do. I was super detached from everything, just staying in this room.

You had a recording set-up already?
I learned how to record on Garageband, actually. I made these laptop Garageband recordings, using mics I'd place in the bathroom. Just experimenting with sound on a really stoned, personal, minute kind of level. Burger Records put out those recordings on a tape, which was cool. My initial idea was to do sort of a Cleaners from Venus inspired thing.

That *Red Plastic* tape? That's a largely electronic record.
Oh absolutely, yeah. I wanted something that I could just do within this very small environment I was living in.

Did you ever think about doing *Red Plastic* with a band?
Well, you couldn't really do that live. It was pop oriented, but it was a total production experiment for me. It was also something that I could do without any money. Fucking cheap! I tracked that stuff on a bed! Total bedroom recording. The name *Red Plastic* actually comes from the color of DVD porn. You know what I'm talkin' about!

Yeah, yeah…OK, so how do you move from *Red Plastic* to the *Freeze* album? Those are pretty drastically different records, but both Andy Human releases.
I'm still playing everything on *Freeze*, with the exception of a few tracks. A drummer who was living in the same house as me at the time played on one. My friends Omar and Tennant did a rhythm track for one song too. A lot of the difference came because I was living in a house that had drums set up permanently in the living room, so I set up my 8-track there as well. Lenz, my other band at the time, was using the same set-up. I was just able to be really productive there.

Did it become a scenario where you could just wake up and record, mics already set up, and do shit whenever?
Eventually, yeah. But pedals got stolen and shit. It was a fairly dubious atmosphere! But it was great for a while. I would just set up and record every day. I was able to hang out, take the time to get the drum parts right, that kind of thing. Even with people around me walking in and out, making breakfast and shit. It didn't matter that much.

It's not purely a matter of logistics and location though, the difference between *Red Plastic* and *Freeze*, is it?
Well, at that same time as *Red Plastic*, I was playing in Holy Shit with Matt Fishbeck, which definitely had an influence. I was thinking about all these sort of dreamy pop things, really. I was totally trying to do, I dunno, really beautiful pop with *Red Plastic*, which was a challenge to do just by myself. Learning how to record was related to that. Recording is always the best way to learn what you're capable of. Andy Human was initially intended to be a recording project. *Freeze* was the next part of that. Different types of recordings.

With Lenz being what you were doing a live band setting?
Right, yeah. And Holy Shit.

But after *Freeze* is when you decided to form a live band for Andy Human?
Yeah, I decided I wanted to do some shows for that record. I put together a band to play that one. Before that, I did play live as Andy Human only a couple of times, just with the songs that I was

working on, around the time of that Tic Tac Totally 7". I played keyboards, Icki's got pictures...I actually played solo doing songs that will never see the light of day. Songs that I specifically wrote for the occasion...There's actually a lot of unreleased recordings that I did during that period. But eventually, playing the Andy Human stuff live just ended up being really fun, more so than anything else.

And the end of Lenz coincides with the formation of The Reptoids?

Pretty much, yeah. I did a few scattered shows with friends before the Reptoids. It didn't come together as fully realized thing. I was still experimenting with different sounds and stuff, which I think you can totally hear on the Reptoids record. It's varied, really. When the Reptoids came together though, it really opened up a lot more possibilities. Getting Cripe Jergensen (Reptoids drummer) in there was the determining factor in the way the band was going to sound.

It's definitely an experience, seeing you perform now, more than it was before.

Yeah, and I think that's mostly because of the drumming. It's a more serious sound! We had auditions, which I had done before at times, but with the Reptoids, it was definitely an audition thing, which is kinda funny. It's hard to know if someone's gonna click, even though I knew Cripe long before the Reptoids. But as soon as he played with us, it was automatically obvious.

What about adding saxophone and multi-instrumentalist Reptoid in Ra Diehl?

I don't calculate the things that I do, man. Maybe I need a fourth person in there as a crutch? Hopefully not! I think I threw that in to the Reptoids sound as a variable that would throw me off and keep me moving and thinking.

It's not as if those contributions are lost or go unnoticed on record or live.

We're making it work. I absolutely love the sax. I didn't think the inclusion of it through as much as you seem to be implying though, so I just want to be clear there. "Wow, it would be interesting to start playing with a sax!" I think, subconsciously, I wanted a variable that I wasn't immediately familiar with.

A wild card?
Yeah! And then to make it work. It's not in there so we could attempt to do Roxy Music, you know? Ever since adding the sax to it though, I will say I've been way more receptive to listening to what other bands do with saxophones. Now it seems like there's almost a new trend, very recently, of bands coming out with sax.

And with that, you'd be just as likely to not have a sax now?
Right, yeah. But I do enjoy it in that it's challenging. It's turned out to a totally unique asset though. It's a tenor sax, which most bands don't seem to utilize. It just sounds really ballsy, really tough.

So is it fair to say then that *Andy Human and the Reptoids* is the first truly realized Andy Human release?
It's the first Reptoids release! I still feel really good about *Freeze*, but I actually consider this Reptoids record to be the first record I've ever made with a band that comes closest to what I truly wanted to accomplish, more than anything I've done before it. I had more control over the ultimate end product than ever before. I'm probably more pleased with this album than anything I've ever done, which is odd because it's an album with a few vastly different recording approaches done at a few different locations, both on our own and in a studio. I've always had big problems with everything else. In hindsight, I think the first Time Flys and the first Cuts records are both really cohesive and cool. The other ones are all a little uneven to me. With the Reptoids, everything is opening up and that's what needs to happen.

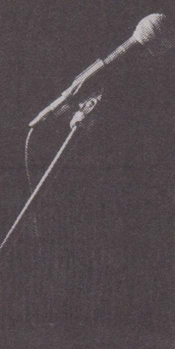
Meaning it's not purely referential? Like you're not setting out with the express purpose for sounding like something specific or something from targeted timeframe?
Absolutely not. That's *exactly* what I'm not going to do. I'm not bound to anything with the Reptoids. In fact, I want to do things that are totally against my instincts. I don't want to recall *anything*, which is different than what I had done in other bands before, you know? If anything, my process is more direct now. A song has to amuse me first. The subject matter has to amuse me, and I find that lately, that honestly comes mostly from me being pissed off.

See, that's one thing specifically I wanted to discuss with you. It feels like the Reptoids record is…
[Interrupting] It's a shedding of allegiance! Before, I'd have

[MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL RECORD REVIEW]

ANDY HUMAN AND THE REPTOIDS - s/t LP

Is there anything that screams "outsider" more than outer space? On his new album, Andy Human finds himself indicting Earth's squares from a vantage point that's far out of orbit, offering bitingly punk provocations that dust many of his more closed-off contemporaries. While this attack was only flirted with on 2012's Freeze, this confrontation's refurbished launch comes courtesy of The Reptoids, Human's oily mutant comrades, offering phased-out drive and synth/sax bleating in barreling fashion. Together, they're a slithering band apart, foil hats tilted dramatically so as to convey all of that extra 'tude.



Lyrically, the record revolves around Human's prickly relationship with all of the confused beings surrounding him. He begins the record by prodding the populace with a knife on "Blood On The Wall", yet concludes with an adjusted rumination on his identity ("I'm not afraid to be the first to die or the last to get paid") on "Biffed Up". Between these bookends is a varied, punky collection of songs that simultaneously recall the adventurous tenants of the early '80s SF scene (strange enough for Subterranean, radio-ready enough for 415), DIY sci-fi eccentrics like Alien City and Simply Saucer, and an imaginative, air-tight nether region somewhere between Kraut Rock skronk and transgressed UK glam groove. The groin-centric buzz of "Yes I No", the further self-realization of "I Got Soul" and the dada call-to-arms theme "Reptoid Rock" are all obvious bright lights.

The linchpin of the entire offering though may very well be "Pictures", which begins with a hopelessly sleazed and punctured guitar riff that quickly gives way to a Roxy-inspired workout, conjuring an image of Reptoid tails and tentacles flailing in unison. It's the sound of rock'n'roll played without a net, possessing so many of the intangibles one would ascribe to proto-punk, yet sounding too fresh to ever be labeled as such. Listeners able to keep pace with Human's ahead-of-the-curve stride will be thankful he and The Reptoids beamed this one down, space-junk crust and all. (SS Records)
—Mitch Cardwell, July 2015

these illusions about a psychedelic reality that didn't exist!

What I'm getting at is that, yeah, there were moments in your previous bands where you seemed angry, but it's more direct and severe with the Reptoids.
Definitely!

I'm just wondering if that's more conscious to you here and now.
That's totally right. I agree. Like I said earlier, it's all part of me opening up. I didn't really allow myself to do these kinds of things before. I've always had an approach where I feel like I'm not bound stylistically. Maybe that's been too in-effect, ya know? But now, I can freely admit that I'm a fairly reactive sort of person. I have a lot of immediate reactions, sometimes I'm just more vocal about them.

And if that immediate reaction is anger or frustration and you have the skills to write a song about it, then…
[Interrupting] Let's talk about approach then. If you will, maybe a punk approach is to hold true to that first reaction or impression and to keep it raw. You have to hold on to that impetus for writing something and you have to know what you have to work with. So these emerging qualities are the songs and you have to know how to latch on to these emerging qualities. That goes all the way through the writing of the song, through the recording and mixing of a record. What makes the point come across? What makes it strong? Those simple factors, that's where talent is, for me. Talent has nothing to do with being able to play everything in the world competently or anything. *[Pauses]* I don't even remember the fucking question! Being angry? OK. What I'm trying to say, back to me being reactive, and that reaction being anger with the Reptoids, I think that anger comes from being in Lenz, which was a very hearts-on-our-sleeves, sensitive pop bunch. I basically got fucking pissed off about that, more or less because it didn't succeed much. And not wanting to do the same shit I was doing before. And fun and humor! The Reptoids has this injection of humor that I pretty desperately needed as well.

That also comes across too in the things you seem to be calling out on the record.
I was getting too pretentious. You gotta tell me though, what is that you think I'm calling out on the record?

Well, already in *MRR*, it's been posited that your album is a pretty spot-on reaction to the growing economic divide around The Bay Area. That said, I'd even go the simpler route and just say that you're really just calling out squares.
[Laughter] Yeah, well as an artist, I think you need to have intense, visceral reactions against things for there to be any merit in what you believe in. If you're looking for some specifics, "Funny" is about stand-up comedians.

Wow. OK. That tune is even harsher than I had initially thought it was then.
It's a comment on enthusiasm, really. Not totally spiteful, but semi-spiteful. And "Blood On The Wall," that's probably the most outwardly political song on the record. I think that's pretty obvious.

What about "I Got Soul"?
Well, for one thing, I think it's funny to actually say that!

You're still setting yourself against others there though. Against everything, no matter what it is.
Like Groucho Marx! See the humor? But yeah, autobiographical bullshit. Part of the humor there is the arrogant quality, being blunt. With "I Got Soul," I just got really pissed off about people's canned and elitist ideas about intelligence. Language itself becomes this ranking tool and it's always classist, it's always against poor people and it's always bullshit. I think is just a total fallacy, just complete nonsense. Additionally, I revel in the contradictions. I want contradiction after contradiction after contradiction. Every time you think you know something, you should question that. Including ideas about music.

So what questions do you have for the next phase of the Reptoids, assuming there is one?
Oh, that's definitely happening. It's already in process. I actually want to do two new records: one solo and one with the Reptoids. I'm at the point right now where I have so many ideas, so many songs, that I can't really wait for the band.

Will one of those records be overwhelmingly positive?
I don't even know what that means! For me, this last record was overwhelmingly positive. You're gonna have to be a little bit more specific in what you're saying I'm rallying against here, because for me, it's varied and there's a mystery. Lyrically anyway, at this point I don't think I could say anything without being overtly critical, honestly. I suppose that's more punk.

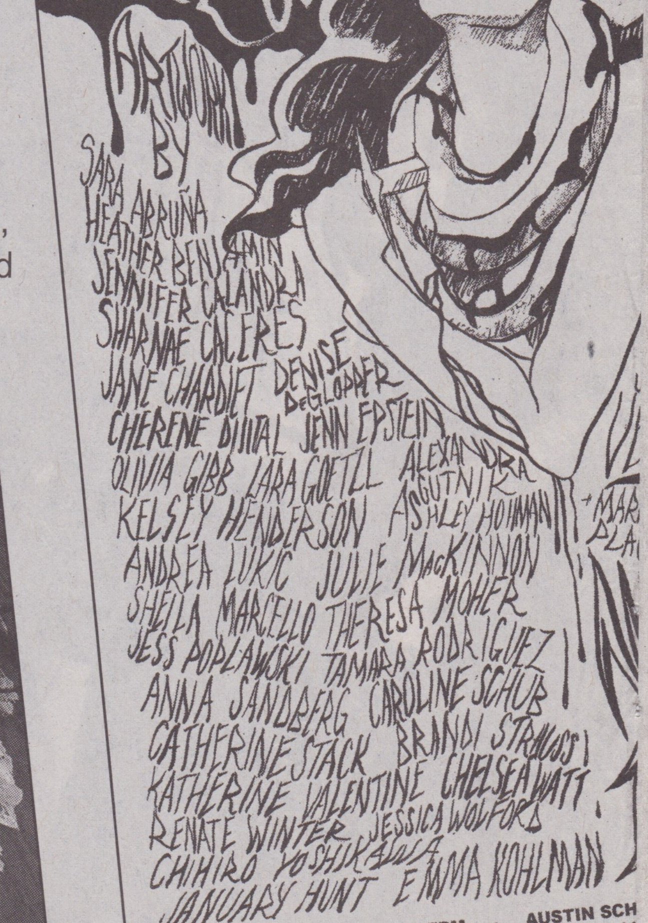
Andy Human And The Reptoids *LP/CD out now on SS RECORDS: ss-records-sol-re-sol-records.myshopify.com.*

See andyhumanthereptoids.bandcamp.com and andyhuman.bandcamp.com for more information.

COLLECTIVE DELUSIO
MASS HYSTER

is an independent art zine featuring female indentifying/femme artists involved in the punk, hardcore, noise, and underground art scenes. The artists work with the theme of identity, sexuality and gender. An exhibition organized by Jennifer Calandra and Theresa Moher took place in Austin, Texas over the weekend of November 13–15th, 2015 and included artwork by Sara Abruna, Heather Benjamin, Sharnae Caceres, Jane Chardiet, Denise DeGlopper, Cherene Dijital, Jenn Epstein, Olivia Gibb, Lara Goetzl, Alexandra Gutnik, Kelsey Henderson, Ashley Hohman, January Hunt, Emma Kohlmann, Andrea Lukic, Julie MacKinnon, Sheila Marcello, Jess Poplawski, Tamara Rodriguez, Anna Sandberg, Caroline Schub, Catherine Stack, Brandi Strauss, Katherine Valentine, Chelsea Watt, Renate Winter, Jessica Wolford, Chihiro Yoshikawa, and the organizers.

Flyer by Lily Maslanka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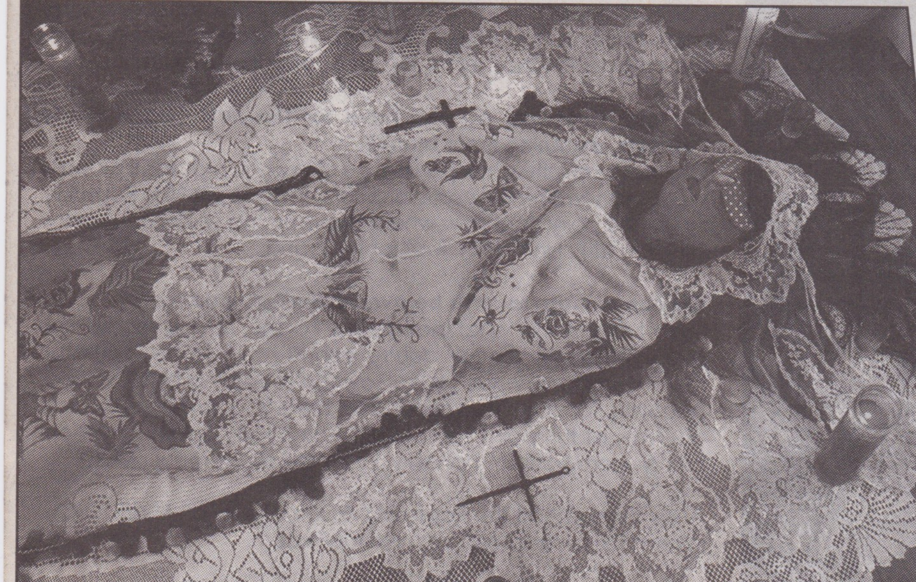

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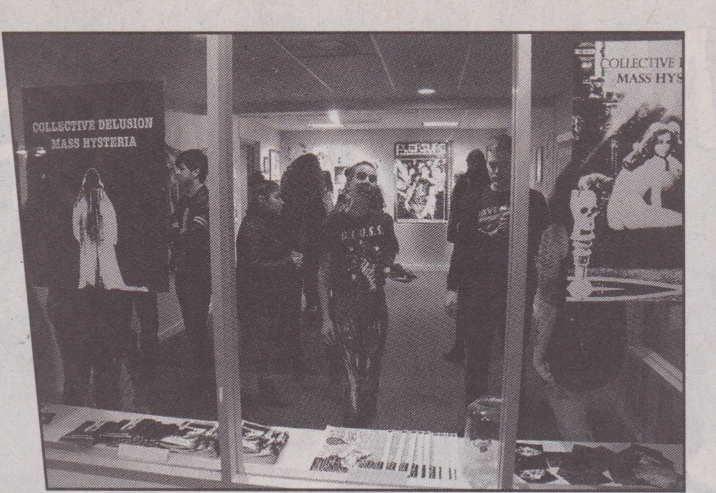
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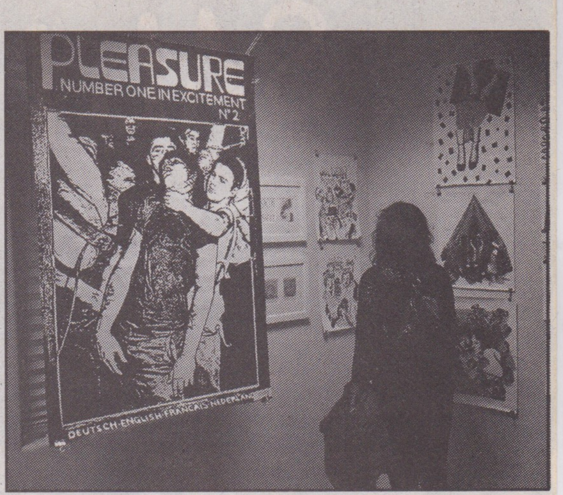
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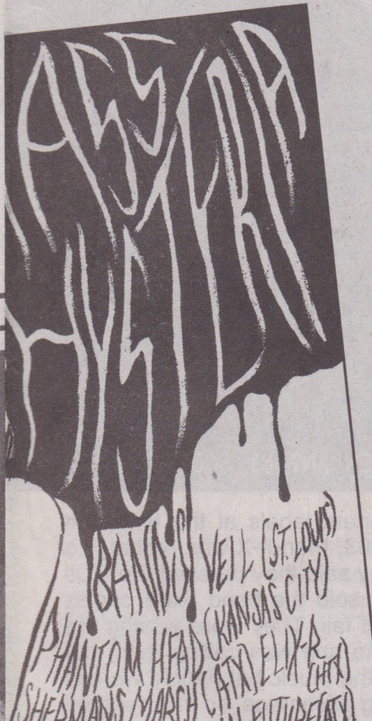
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SALINAS RECORDS

ATTENDANT BY SCOTT TROYAN

A new Salinas Records release is spinning on my turntable, and I am begrudgingly sitting at my desk trying to figure out how to hook you into reading this interview. If you are lucky enough to have crossed paths with Marco, the sole operator of Salinas Records, then this blurb really isn't necessary. In fact trying to convince you to read this is contrary to Marco's entirely self-effacing approach to running a label. He puts out the records he likes, and he lets them speak for themselves. Despite all the opportunities to do so he never inserts himself into the narrative of his releases. If you haven't been lucky enough to meet Marco, you may still know Salinas as the label behind releases from bands like Swearin', Purple Seven, Delay, Potboiler, Radiator Hospital and the State Lottery, among many others. Marco visited San Francisco in August and we spoke on the back porch for a few hours with the tape recorder rolling.

Introduction and interview by Jason Brownstein.

Give us a little background on Salinas Records. When you started putting out records were there labels that you looked to for guidance or as examples?

I started Salinas in 2003 without much intention behind it. I was in a band and my goals for the label were put out my 7" and go on tour. Anything else beyond that would have been icing on the cake.

I was very anxious about it because I started playing in bands really late. I played my first show when I was 22. I was thinking "We can't wait, we have to do this now." So we recorded after being a band for only three or four months and booked a tour for that summer. Obviously we had to put this 7" out ourselves, and I was just kind of the person in charge of doing it. I don't even remember if there was a discussion about the name of the label, but I just put Salinas Records and a PO Box on the back cover [so if] the tour went well there would at least be some way to contact us. I think around that time my friends from Detroit were also talking about doing a 7", so I offered to help them put it out thinking that there would be a tiny catalogue for people to order and I would get the benefit of helping [out a] band that I think is fantastic. Then all of sudden it's twelve years later.

Not that there weren't other important labels at the time, but being that I was in the Midwest in 2003, Plan-It-X was probably a pretty important measuring stick. They said they pressed the CDs or records, gave the band 20% and sold the band extra copies at cost. That seemed reasonable and fair. They were waving the flag of "doing it the right way" and no one was calling them out on that aspect. Not everybody loved the music but people weren't accusing them of profiteering or taking advantage, so that seemed like the model.

That aspect was very important to me because I grew up in a household that was pretty anti-capitalist. My parents are very political. Sometimes I meet people who got into punk as a very reactionary thing against the way they were raised, but my experience was very different from that.

Twelve years is a long time to have a label. What is it about putting out records that keeps you doing it? Are there specific parts of the process that you enjoy?

I think the motivation is something that changes as you get older. When I was 22 the motivation was "I have to put out another record so there is a catalogue" and then after that band broke up I had this idea that if I was helping my friend's band, there needed to be a newer record to accompany it. At that point I was still playing in a lot of bands and going on tour. It felt important to do that because that was part of what I was doing. There has always been an underlying thing that you want to help these bands have a record of what they are doing. You want to have it look good and at least have a minimal amount of distribution. When I was playing in bands it felt very much like we were all in this together.

I have gotten older and stopped going on tour, but I think a lot of it now is that this is part of the way that I make sure that I am still connected to what is going on. I am 35 and I am a high school teacher. It would be very easy for me to slip into the mindset of punk not being part of my life anymore. So now it is a very conscious thing about making sure I am actively involved. Same thing with booking shows at the Trumbullplex. It's a very conscious way of being involved and not [staying in] my little window of perspective.

What is the Trumbullplex? When was the first time you went there?
I think the first time I went to a show at the Trumbullplex was in 1997. I'm constantly hoping to find a flyer from that show to confirm. It's a show space that has been in Detroit for 22 years. It's a DIY, all ages show space. It's in an attached garage in a collectively owned house that has been collectively owned since the '80s. The shows are booked by a collective that is made up of people that live in the house and a few people who don't live in the house. I'm one of the people that books that there that doesn't live there. We meet every two weeks. We try to prioritize bands that have women/queer/POC members. We generally don't work with booking agents. We try to be a good neighbor in the community, and we open up the space for benefits. For me it's an important place, because until I had been there, shows spaces in Detroit always felt either really temporary or really business-like. I like to look at it as a part of the radical community in Detroit. It's a space that is not just for punk music but other things that are going on here.

How long have you lived in Detroit? What is your relationship to the city? What keeps you there?
I have lived in and around Detroit for most of my life, but I lived in the city in two stints: from birth until seven and from around age twenty-one until the present. I've never lived more than an hour away from Detroit. In a weird way, for me Detroit is where my family history is. My mother's side of the family is very small and my father's side of the family history, which is very big, sort of begins in Detroit. My grandfather was orphaned and came to Detroit almost directly from Italy. There is this element of wanting to stay where the family is from.

Everyone has a weird relationship with their hometown, but Detroit is this really fascinating place. It's not like the things that have happened in Detroit haven't happened elsewhere but it tends to be more extreme. You have this incredible boom of population because of the auto industry, the biggest influx of African Americans to the North due to the auto industry jobs and war industry jobs, there is an incredible history of racial strife, there is an incredible amount of segregation in this city, there is a rich history of music and art. If you want to get the boiled down experience of living in an American city, I think it's a really interesting place to do that. I'm sure this happens in other places, but now there is a sense of being a quitter if you leave at this point. Sixty-percent of the population has already left and you don't want to join them. If you move out you are admitting that you couldn't hack it. It's sad but I think it's honestly one of the reasons I stay. I also have a job I like. My family is there. My wife is from Michigan. I also like being in a place that I know. I have a tendency to go to the same places when I travel so I can kind of grasp on to that feeling of familiarity. Maybe this is not so much a question for *MRR* but for a psychiatrist.

There are a lot of records coming out of places like Philly, New York, Boston. How is Detroit different from those places?
Detroit is physically huge, but it's really sparsely populated. The city proper is 150 square miles. People always say you could fit San Francisco, Boston, and Manhattan in it but it's only a quarter the combined population of those cities. In Detroit things are very segmented because of the large amount of physical space. I also think that for a long time there were lots of bands that were seen as the next White Stripes/Gories/Dirtbombs, playing garage rock stuff that straddles that line between punk rock and garage music. I think there is still some of that. It doesn't sound like the Gories or the White Stripes but it still has a lot of that flavor. One of the things I'll say is that I like a lot of Detroit bands, and maybe some of those bands don't exist in the kind of world where my label can really help them at all, but I have never felt an absolute allegiance to Detroit bands. I never considered being just a Detroit label, because I think there is too much interesting stuff worth documenting outside of Detroit.

How can you operate a label and still work full-time?
I am a full-time public high school teacher, and I have been a teacher for most of the time that I have done the label. In terms of the timing aspect, it helps now that I just have one distribution method to deal with, which is No Idea Records in Florida. The first three or four years that I did the label I did a lot more distribution with other labels and distros and that became almost a nightmare [in terms of] contacting all these people and keeping records of where stuff might have been. I think it was getting to the point where I would have had to stop doing the label because at that point teaching was more important to me than doing a record label. Coincidentally right as things were reaching critical mass, No Idea approached me about doing the distribution exclusively. I ended up doing that, so now when a record comes out I pack some up for the band and I pack some up for No Idea and I do mail order through Salinas and that's it. If it wasn't for that I probably would have stopped.

I know it's cliche to ask the vinyl guy how digital music has affected your operation but has it changed what you do? Do you think much about it?
It definitely hasn't changed what I do. I think I have a different mindset than most people, in part because when I started the label I think that punk records weren't really being sold online. The label isn't old enough to have lived through the '90s where you could make thousands of copies of a record and expect to sell it. I never experienced feeling like I was losing out on all these record sales because stuff is online, but also because I don't want people to have a record that they don't want. If they would rather be really casual about it and just have the digital copy of it than that is fine. I don't see it as draining from my sales.

When No Idea started handling putting stuff on iTunes and all the other digital distribution stuff the standard was that Apple took a cut and No Idea took a cut and then the band and the label would split what was left, but I never wanted any piece of that. To me it always felt really dishonest to take money from digital sales because I didn't make the mp3s. The vinyl records I actually have a hand in making it so it was fair for me to have a part in getting paid for that, but I didn't make the music so it didn't make sense to make money from the digital sales. Maybe that is because I didn't come from a world where digital sales were draining from my record sales. I started the label at the right time for that.

What about bandcamp now? You can put out a record that then goes on bandcamp where people will give money to bands and totally circumvent you…
I think it's cool because it means that people can hear the record and decide if they want to own the vinyl copy as well. I found from talking to some of the bands that people give the bands money for something that they could get for free. People will just send money directly or come to the shows and buy the record that they already paid for on bandcamp. Ultimately if the goal of the label is to help the bands do their thing and have a record and go on tour then if they want to put it on bandcamp and give it away for free or charge $5—whatever they think is best for them—I don't give a fuck.

What is your process for deciding to put something out? This is a weird question to me because you have put out my records…
I'm glad that you mentioned that. That's always one of my pet peeves about zines that don't reveal that this is a pretty small world. When I see people reviewing records that they have some real obvious connection to it always makes me kind of suspect. It's a small world so it's going to happen a lot, but it should be out in the open. It's one of those things where if you know the social circles then you understand that it's kind of inevitable. It's a small subsection of people but if you don't acknowledge it, that is kind of weird to me. It makes sense that it happens, It just irks me.

So what is your process. Is there anything more to it than you put out records that you like?
First and foremost it has to be something that I like. I generally ask people to put records if I know them or if they are friends of friends. It's taking that small scene and making it even smaller. Either you are a friend of mine and I have known you for a long time, or you are a friend of someone I know really well and I trust their judgment that you are not scummy people. And then as much as I don't want to be driven by money I definitely at times have to turn down a record because I know I will lose every penny that I put into it. I don't want to present myself as some sort of altruistic person who is unaware of money. It doesn't

have to make all of its money back, but I consider if there is a legitimate chance that it will make most of the money back. Sometimes that doesn't work. But I have to think, "Does this record have a chance to recoup the costs?"

How do you judge whether you think a record have chance of making its money back?
Generally the question is: "does a band go on tour?" For the amount of records that I am pressing, as long as the band goes on tour the record won't be a complete loss. Every once in a while I am wrong. But in general if bands are touring, it will probably be fine. Maybe that is overly optimistic of me.

In the description for the Salinas Ten Year Anniversary Show someone wrote "Marco has put out almost 50 records, many of which contribute to the modern pop punk canon. Neither hyper-punk, nor particularly slick pop, Salinas is a reliable middle ground of earnest, gritty expression with faithfully melodic underpinnings." People think of Salinas Records as having a "sound." Do you give much thought to that?
I can tell you who wrote that. It was my dear, dear friend Bobby Colombo who has played in a bunch of bands that I love including some bands that I put out records for including the Gibbons and the State Lottery. He currently plays in a band called Bonny Doon. He set up the anniversary show. Bobby has a real way with words. He actually officiated my wedding and wrote a very nice service. Bobby is fantastic. I guess that blurb is relatively accurate. I don't think I have ever put out anything that is hyper punk or aggressive and I don't have much interest in stuff that is really slick and overproduced. I guess that is just what I like. If I were to list off a lot of my favorite bands, they would fit that description. It's a bit of a non-description, and it is a reaction to two things, but those are a lot of my favorite bands.

Not that I am particularly concerned with genres but do you call this genre "melodic punk"? A lot of these bands aren't strictly pop punk. Does it really matter?
I just tend to call it melodic because pop punk has this very specific connotation. I don't think these bands fit with it. I don't care if someone else uses that phrase and I do think that lot of people that hear the records on Salinas would describe them as pop punk and I don't think that is a problem. I just don't use that term as often because when I hear it I think of something more specific. I hear a smaller window of things that sound like the Ramones or sound like Lookout Records.

Do you have a PR person for your label?
I don't have a PR person for any of the releases that I have done. Two bands have hired PR people on their own to do press for two of the recent records.

Do you think differently of the records you've put out that have been given the press treatment?
I guess no. I don't think of the records differently. To some degree it paid off with the one record. The other one is just in the process of coming out so I guess we'll see. I definitely got some of the residual benefit from that, but it's really hard to quantify how much it helped sell the actual records.

Have you noticed more DIY bands turning to PR as an option? What is the precedent for that and where do you think that is coming from?
I think one of the things I wish I knew more about all these records that are being written about—or maybe I'm glad I don't know enough about—is how many records total are being pressed. Sometimes I hear this complaint that there are too many bands out there and it's so easy to start a band now. I think maybe the PR game is a reaction to that. There are so many bands going on tour that you have to find some way to make a dent. To help your band stand out in this huge pool of musicians that are also trying to write songs and go on tour. It's easier to record now, so many people record their own stuff, it's easier to put your songs online now. You can be a band, do a home recording, put your songs on bandcamp or soundcloud really quickly so maybe it's a reaction to [that]. Maybe bands feel like they need to have some sort of help in making people pay attention to them.

Do you think that's true?
I don't know. I don't think so, but I also have not been in a band that has toured in seven years. And I wasn't ever in a band that people gave a shit about when we were touring. Without having been in a touring band in a

JOYRIDE! BY JASON ROMERO

AMBULARS BY RAMSEY BEYER

RADIATOR HOSPITAL BY JR

RADIATOR HOSPITAL

POTBOILER BY MELISSA HUMPHRIES

long time, I really feel like if you go on tour and your music is good maybe you won't be granted your every wish but you can do ok.

It's not that you are morally opposed to it, but you haven't bothered to turn to it. What's the conflict?
I think part of it is that I don't have any interest in it. I was talking to Bean from Try The Pie about this and they had this great phrase about how they saw Salinas as a kind of archival enterprise. I don't want it to be just for the history shelves but I don't have the same interest in helping a band make tons of money. I want to help a band make a physical record because I think it's cool and it should be on people's shelves. I want to help you make a physical record because it will help you go on tour to have a record to sell. It will help your band do those kind of really rudimentary steps.

Once you ask a PR person to go out and promote a record, or furthermore if you as a band have a label hire a PR person, you as a band are now two steps removed from how that record is being presented and where that record is showing up in print. Is it next to some shitty ad for Budweiser now? I think while you can't completely control who likes your music or who writes about your music, if you are actively hiring someone to go out and promote promote promote, and especially now if you are removing from the band to the label to the PR agency, you lose some control over that I imagine. That doesn't interest me at all.

Within the world of DIY and punk it definitely is a red flag. Not that it's a mortal sin necessarily but I think maybe raises some questions about what else is going on. [Through} the little bit of contact I have with PR firms every once in awhile, it seems that it's a replica of mainstream music culture that labels like Geffen used. It's using the exact same formula of these huge companies so that if I take the band's music and take control of it and put it in the hands of the PR person, how is that any different than me telling a band to sign this contract with Geffen records in 1990-whatever so I can market them a certain way so they can be the next Nirvana or the next Green Day. Obviously the methods have changed a little bit over time but it's still the same "we are going to hire people to call up newspapers and email people to tell them to buy this record." If I wanted to do the label as a full-time job and I wanted to sit at home and email people and contact people, that's already a little weird because I have a financial interest in someone else's art. On the other hand I care a lot about this music. These are great records. But if I just want to buy somebody's access to it, it's because I want to duplicate the success of some huge indie band. I think that is the reality, you don't use a press agent to get your record reviewed at *MRR* or *Razorcake* or *Give Me Back*, but you do use a press agent to break into something else.

You said "I care about these records" which I think implies that you care how they are presented. What about people who have a different line of logic that goes something like "because I care about this record, I need to get it in the *New York Times*"?
I guess some of the reality is that I think my friends who I have helped make records for are doing amazing things, but I don't know if any of them need to be written in the *New York Times*. I think the *New York Times* should be covering institutional racism or something. I think they have more important things to deal with. I don't think these records are the most important thing on earth. So I can't justify spending all my time shouting from the mountaintop "Hey, pick up these records" despite the fact that I think they are great. I also don't know how much that stuff helps. I stopped advertising in *MRR* and *Razorcake* years ago and maybe if I had continued to do ads I could have helped bands sell more records, but it was never something I was going to spend my time and effort doing. Sometimes I operate on the assumption that everyone buys records the way I do which is maybe a friend told me this record is good, or I saw this band on tour, or it's ex-members of this band I like. I very rarely see an ad in *MRR* for a band I don't know that makes me think "I have to buy that record right now." In the same way very rarely do I read something online about a band I didn't already care about and

SWEARIN' BY RB

ONE REASON BY CHRIS GEORGE

without hearing it gain some kind of interest in that band.

Since you can hear almost anything before you buy it now, I don't how much a press agent can do by writing a fancy bio. At the Trumbullplex we get these emails that want us to book them a show and they will write these incredibly long biographies of their band and they will include these really long press pieces and it baffles me. I'm not going to read this. I'm going to hear the band and find out if I am interested in the music and try to briefly figure out if they are shitbags or not. If I like the music and they don't seem like shitbags then hopefully I can find them a show. I don't need a 20-page bio of your band. That's one of the other realities besides all of the other qualms I have with the press agency game. I know that on some level it works but I don't know how much it works.

It doesn't work for you, but there are probably people who aren't involved in punk who will see something on *Pitchfork* and the *New York Times* and listen to it. I don't know if that is good but it's happening.

That is always one of the dynamics within punk though. If you believe the music within punk— which is a pretty big thing to presuppose—but if you believe the music itself is really important then there is always that dynamic that if the message is important then we need people to hear that message. How do you do that without reaching people who are outside of punk? On the other hand I don't know if that is always what is most important. I think it's more about creating a space where people can feel at home and be weird—not that punk has the greatest history of doing that. There are obviously lots of ways that it is fucked up and exclusionary, but I think if a lot of people look back at how they got interested in punk in the first place because there was a sense of not having a place to fit in. This group is for people who don't fit in, and I think that is valuable in a way that is not going to be helped by *Pitchfork.*

That lends itself to the question that I was thinking about. If a band is message-oriented couldn't a mainstream publication "help"? You pointed out earlier,"I think the *New York Times* should write about institutional racism" but think about a band like Downtown Boys who are writing very specifically about things like institutional racism. In that case there is a motivation to want everyone to hear these lyrics, and not just people that already subscribe to punk.

The reality is that is an interesting line and it's a thin line and it's one that I am honestly kind of glad that I don't have to navigate. I've never played in a band that is that specifically message oriented. I was in a band once that used to joke about being the most ethical punk band, and the joke of course was that of course we can hold true to our ethics because no one is asking us to compromise those ethics. No one was asking us to be in *Vice*. I am probably kind of happy that I don't have to make that call. If I was in Downtown Boys and had to scrutinize every decision or worry about other people scrutinizing my every decision it would be tough on me. For a band like that, ultimately someone is going to criticize you. Where do you find that balance of what is worth doing to get this conversation beyond just people in punk? I think when people have this conversation people forget that people in punk don't exist within a biosphere where they never contact the rest of the world. One of the things that I remind myself is that I am a high school teacher who comes in contact with a huge piece of institutional racism every day and part of the way I deal with it has been influenced by punk. This idea that we are just preaching to the choir and everybody knows this already kind of ignores the fact that lots of people that view themselves as part of punk also are teachers. On the records that are part of Salinas there are a lot of people that are in education and social work who are then influenced by what they hear, what is being discussed in scenes, and on panels and they take that out into the other parts of their world.

The next Salinas release is the new LP from Oakland, CA's Acid Fast, Last Night On Earth. *Order it and other Salinas records at salinasrecords.com.*

PUNK IN BEIRUT:
TEX FOX

Tex Fox is one of the most hardcore and heartfelt punks I've ever had the honor of sitting down with. Raised on the streets of Beirut, Lebanon, Tex found punk music at the age of fifteen and traded his firearm for a guitar. For years Tex dedicated his time to his band Detox, a hardcore band that created the meanest hardcore punk and social critique in a land torn apart by a civil war where blood was shed and over a million were forced to leave their homes. Since Detox disbanded Tex has made Artscape his lifeline. Artscape is a multicultural DIY center in the heart of Hamra, Beirut fighting against the omnipresent apathy. Tex himself puts himself out there as a positive example for anyone listening. The first thing I did after arriving in Hamra was water a guerrilla garden Tex had planted in the alley next to Artscape.

Interview and introduction by Jüho Hänninen.

الزم اليسار
Keep Left

We're here with Tex Fox from Artscape Beirut. You wanna start by introducing yourself?
This is Tex speaking. June 20th 2015. Thirty years old. And I have Ratface. [The dog.] Artscape is the place I guess. I'm a human being. And we're doing an interview about punk rock in Beirut. Fuck yeah.

You have a political thing going on but in the best way. You have a space that offers people the chance to do what they want to do. You seem really dedicated.
That's the difference between us and everybody else. All the talk is true.

You're into anarchy.
I kinda identify myself with it because I never felt in place anywhere else. So my own Lebanese anarchy thing. Anarchy for me really means taking responsibility for yourself. Be a leader but not on other people. Be your own leader. And everybody else should be a leader. And they should self-determine their life. And that's very important.

And you're trying to do this for other people.
Yea, I'm supporting them.

And what's music for you?
Music is just a way for me to express myself. It cannot change the world ever. I say all the things I have in me. That's how the music is. Very offensive and not politically correct at all.

So about punk in Beirut—you've been around since the beginning. You wanna tell me how punk came to Beirut?
It was one person. Her name was Aida.

Who is Aida?
She was the singer of Detox and my ex-wife. She was around fourteen when she brought punk here. She was different than the rest of us who were listening to metal. It started to spread around when she and I joined forces. I was the guy who created the scene in Hamra. It was a cool city, a dark city, extremely inspiring. We started to hang out there. We were a big group. It was in 2005 that we found a huge underground whorehouse and started hanging around there. There were two big venues and five little rooms where people used to fuck but we changed them into jamming rooms. We hung out

PUNK
SLOW
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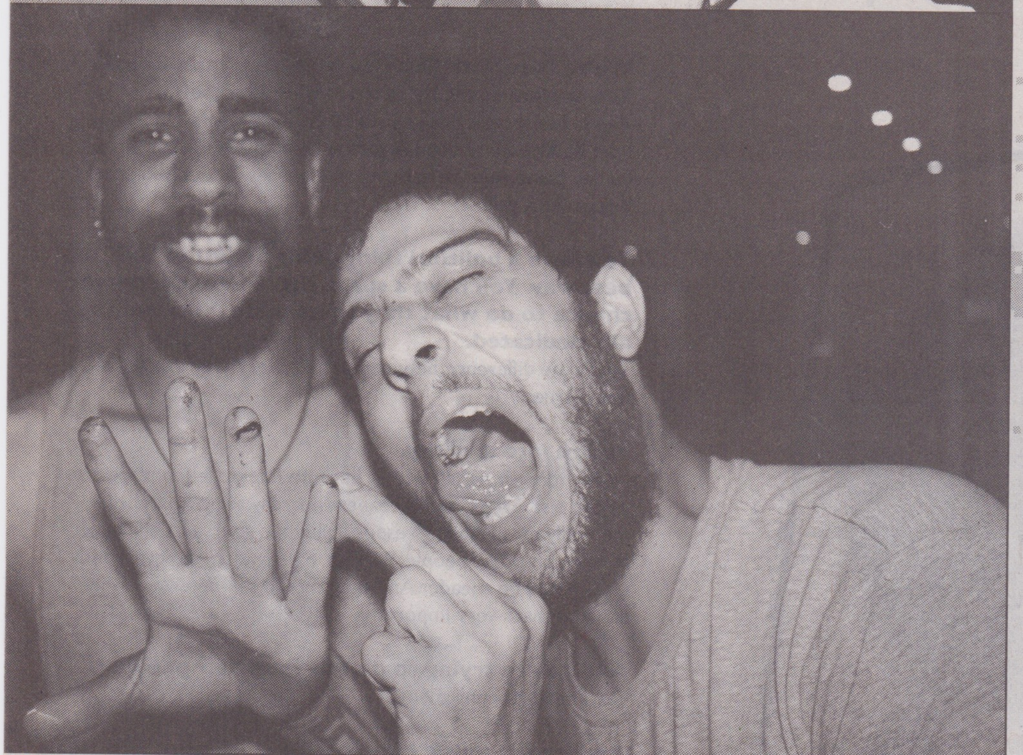

there every day, got drunk and jammed and got musically productive. We were really young and it was really fun. The first punk band in Lebanon was Benzene, which started at Pavilion [the underground whorehouse] in 2005.

Every day was a fucking story. Sometimes we'd sleep there when we got really wasted. The guy who owned it was a Kurdish ex-convict in Germany. A drug dealer who came back and lived underground. We were his only customers. Really fucking awesome nights. Blasting Venom or Carnivore and jamming. A fight happens, we go outside and kick the shit out of everybody. Or we go see a gig and a fight will happen. It was kinda like that.

The whorehouse was your own place?

It was exclusively for us. We just had to go and buy cheap beer from there and that's how the place ran. As much as we drank was as much money as he made. The more gigs we had the more money he made. So the owner was really supportive of our chaos.

How old were you then?

I was 20.

Aida, what was her role in this?

What can I say…She is very charismatic and aggressive. She used to start most of the fights, beating up people with brass knuckles. She found that thing in herself and brought it outside, something that didn't exist. I'm talking about the DIY philosophy and the image, the balls and the music. But the punk scene failed. People haven't made new punk bands or anything. But the people definitely loved the music. But punk as a lifestyle didn't happen here. And I'm trying to figure out why.

How many bands were there in that scene?

Around five. We had shared members and the place became like a cult. When the Hamra scene started, it was very special. It was all started by Nightchains, my first band. We were brought up in a cover scene, where bands only played covers. So we decided that we wanted to make something really awesome. The best thing you could ever hear, your greatest band. We played the shit we wanted to hear and we didn't have around us. We weren't really musicians in the technical sense but we did our best to sound even better than our idols. Coming from Beirut you know you're not going to be a rockstar—the sooner you learn that the better. But it shouldn't discourage you from playing like one. You know, but just not expecting anything. You channel anti-rock'n'roll music. And it's better.

Then the war happened. But the gigs were phenomenal. We used to fight a lot on the street because we just attracted trouble. We were too extreme. But everyone was trying to make a band, then we'd just be drunk and get too excited.

Were the two scenes in a war?

Oh, yeah. People were so jealous at the other side of town that they banned us from playing there. We were Venom and they were Iron Maiden. We had attitude and shit used to get violent in mosh pits. It sadly ended in becoming sectarian, West Beirut and East Beirut. Muslim/Christian stupid shit.

We had a grindcore band, a war metal band, a hardcore band, a punk band, and a thrash band. All sounded almost exactly the same because we were the same group of friends with the same intensity to be the best. No poseurs were fucking allowed. That thing changed quickly with the war with Israel in 2006. Everybody got a wake-up call. A lot from our group became religious. The same ones who used to piss on mosques, open a Koran and put their dick in just for fun. We used to fuck around with all kinds of religious stuff.

Do you know why they got into Islam? Just got back to their old lives?

I have no idea. Identity crisis, depression? One extreme to another? Life on earth? Sometimes you can't get too involved in the shit. [After the war started] the whole group split apart. And everybody started changing. The whole scene was dying. Died actually. Except for a couple of gigs in 2007 when I formed the Gamblers, a Motörhead-ish band. We always played originals since the beginning, never covers. That was our basic problem with the rest of the country's scene.

Detox played live for the first time in 2009. We got a gig in Turkey to play with Oi Polloi. Instead we went to prison for smoking hash, missing the gig. Chain reaction life decisions took me and Aida to Denmark to freeze for a year and half. Then we came back and within one year released three killer albums and played two live gigs before we got screwed by our drummer Panda, who gave the excuse of wanting to accomplish more in his life than playing with Detox and working as a shisha waiter.

What does the scene mean to you?
I always believed in community. And that's obvious. Since the beginning, that's what we've been trying to do. Because if I didn't I'd just focus on my stuff and not on the whole thing. My music does have a message. It really does, and the lyrics really prove it. The place here also proves it. I want everybody to save their own souls by being productive, you know. I have so much love at the same time as I have hate. I forgave everybody. I just think about the future. I'm trying to build a network here and influence a lot of people. I did the first zinefest here and that's how you are here! I want to bring good bands here too. A lot of people have a lot to give but they just need somebody to tell them that they can do it. Organize something or you know…

You feel like it's working?
Definitely, just don't expect as much from people as from yourself. You'll always be proud.

Were you angry as an adolescent? Are you still angry?
When you're younger you cannot hide it like you can when you grow older. But yeah, I was much more stubborn than now. When you learn from life you understand you need to be patient. Because we wanted everything to happen our way very fast. And we were fucking right, you know, but you have to know how to be patient with things and with people's support. That's the whole story. It was very disappointing to me to see everyone betraying what we were building, one band member at a time.

Before or after the war?
After the war.

It's kinda different when I see you listen to Antisect's "Tortured and Abused" when you've been through the war and live in a society filled with injustice and violence. I mean you probably know what the song is about more than the person who wrote it.
That's why we are the way we are, because we can relate to it too much. And when we make it we make it even better. And of course we relate to it. We are really surprised when we go to shows and stuff and see everything behind the curtain. It's disappointing sometimes to see the punks…when we thought they were activists and stuff like that.

You see this in Europe?
Yeah, Europe. That's why for the last four years I haven't been listening to punk. I've been listening to Frank Zappa. I saw more punk in his music than punk.

I find your interest in GG Allin interesting. What does he represent to you?
The mirror of society. He is every one of us. Just doing the shit we wanna do. And the ugly people. The ugliness of him is the ugliness of people. And the craziness is like very one of us. How we feel towards other people. And yeah, he is hated. And he is hated for reason. And I find it really interesting. I can relate to that. The songs were a projection of the society. It's like when you have a band. What you listen to is different than what you create. What is coming out is only you.

The projection is a small part of you.
Yeah.

What are your main influences?
Right now I'm listening to Sacrilege, a thrash crust band from the UK.

How many are you into the idea of having a punk scene in Beirut at the moment?
If you do a punk gig a lot of people go. Doesn't mean they are punks. But yeah…I mean, if I play a gig people will come, you know, I guess we can call ourselves punks but I'm paying rent and have to make it. We are productive, we save animals, we steal to eat, we're content and we believe in struggle.

It's important for you to have a movement.
It's the only way for survival on the personal level at least.

Are there other music scenes in Beirut?
There is electronic. And it took all the metalheads with it. They just do drugs and act so spiritual and shit, it's like the hippies all over again, except the music sucks and the drugs ruin lives. Ecstasy killed the anarchy.

What's the last gig you attended in Beirut?
Ziad Rahbani, an Arabic folk musician known for his sarcasm on society.

What's the last punk gig you went to?
Lebanon hasn't had a punk gig since April 2012—the last Detox gig.

Are there any new bands coming along?
I'm forming a band with the third generation. The band is called DIY. We're planning on playing in the old whorehouse that everything started in ten years ago.

You were talking about the second and third generation punks. The first generation died in the war?
Yeah. [The second] generation were very unproductive—only one band came out of it, Thrashstorm, who are still playing a couple of shows a year.

We are just getting started. We are much more mature. We don't care about the lifestyle. I mean what you look like. The shit is gonna get serious now. We are gonna do what all the punk bands preach about but in like real life. This time we are fucking sober from drugs and this time we have learned our lessons and this time we have finally learned to trust people. So now everything really happens.

What are your ideas? How realistic it to see the punk scene growing?
I don't see it as much in bands or music. But as a country or a movement, we've always been more punk than in other places, man. Beirut is total anarchy and we have no system to fight. We just have to fight each other because it seems like you get to the point where it's beyond anarchy. It's like, there was anarchy and the war, let's say. The anarchists sold out and they became malicious people and corrupt leaders. A vicious cycle. I think now we can find real solutions by creating something for other people so they can build on. And that's always been the struggle. But this time it's for real. Because we just have nothing to lose anymore.

So you're expecting to grow as a movement?
Yeah. Time is on our side now. Our next project is influenced by the ALF. We have started working on Animal Rescue Operations with a private land and volunteers. Where there is ignorance there is fun.

What's the future of Artscape?
To close down.

Why?
There's too much energy in this place and there will be a time when good things end. But it will be a start for another thing, which will be even closer to the truth of really fucking making a difference and a change. If I close down today I still have the contacts of all the people and I can just organize stuff on the street. I don't need to worry about the rent or the fucking yoga classes. I can dedicate all my time to activism and making music. And then I will be more free. For everybody to see. I'll be out there.

To contact Tex write to his PO Box at Astral Agricultural 113 6086 Beirut Lebanon. If it's just for saying hello, facebook him at Tex Fox. See *youtube.com/detoxlb* for more information on Detox.

BEIRUT
ZINE
FESTIVAL
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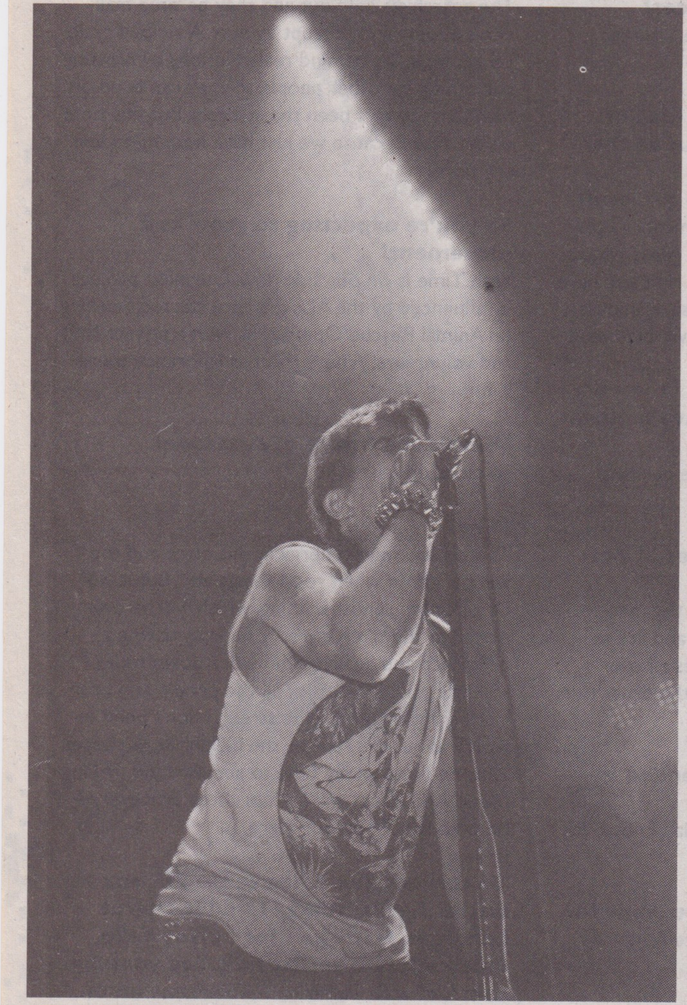
SHARE YOUR IDEAS
AND CONTRIBUTE TO
OUR COLLECTIVE
FOLLOW THE

STATIC SHOCK WEEKEND // NOVEMBE
LONDON, ENGLAND // PHOTOS BY SIM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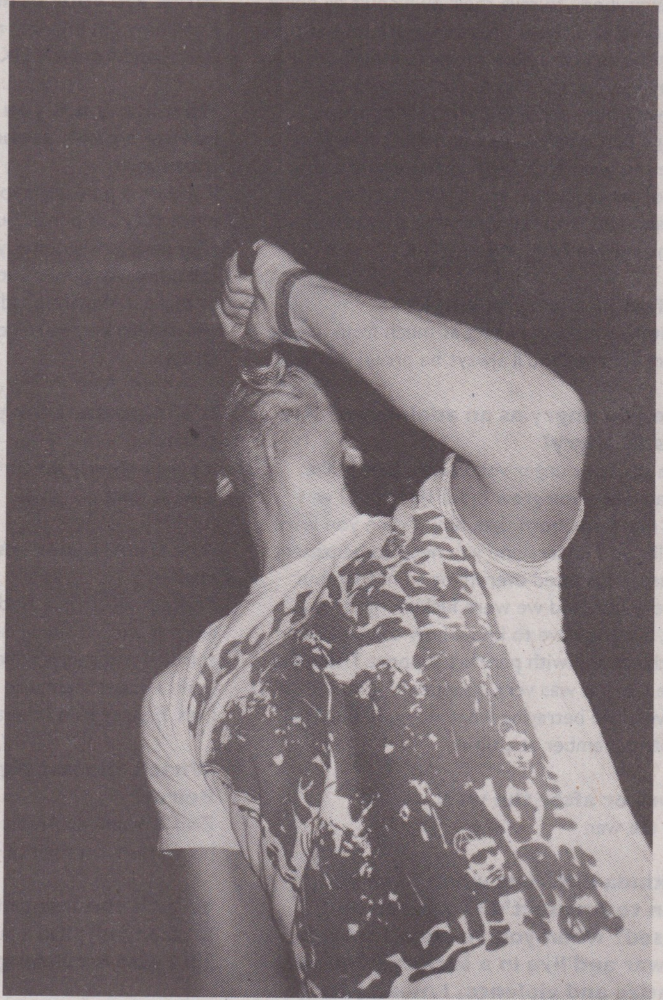
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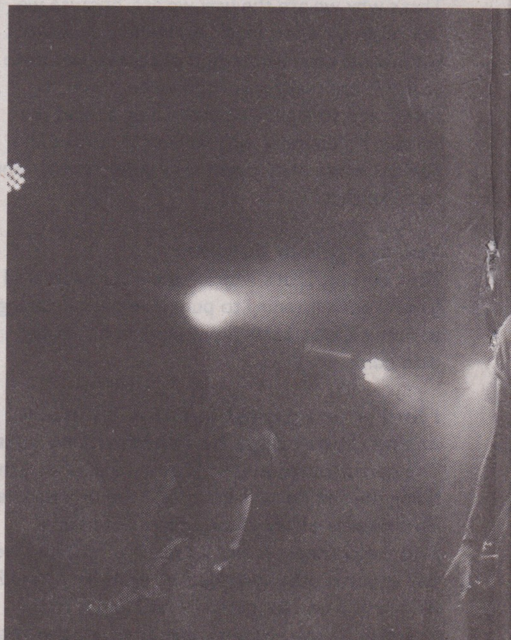
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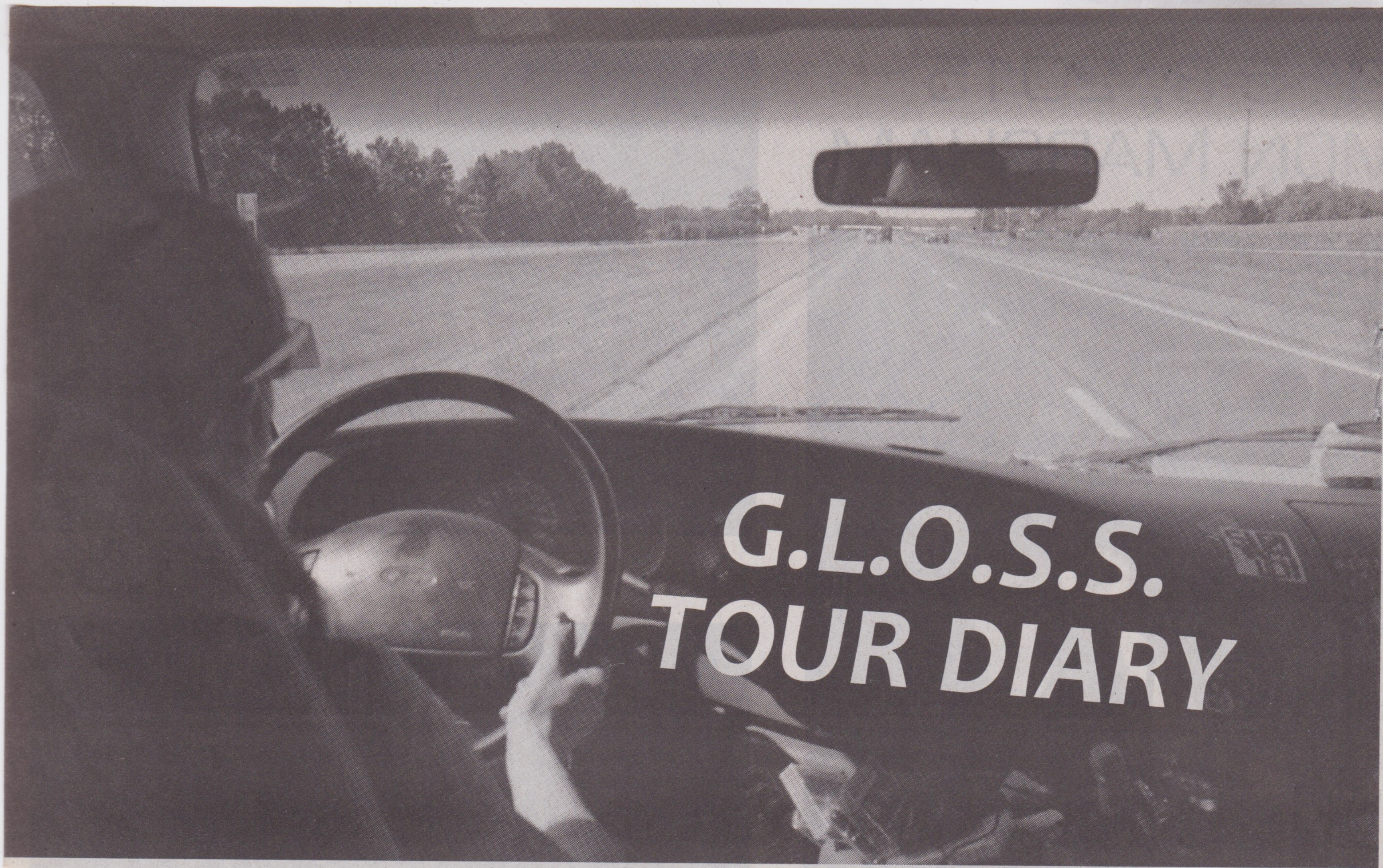


G.L.O.S.S. TOUR DIARY

G.L.O.S.S. went on their first big tour in the fall of 2015, traversing the U.S. with some stops in Canada. Bassist Julaya Antolin documented the trip in words and photos.

8/31: Tacoma, Washington @ 733 Arts with Vexx, Binge, Criminal Code, Bind
9/1: Seattle, Washington @ Office Space with Mysterious Skin, Jaeng, Lysol, Vacant Life
9/2: Olympia, Washington @ Flophouse with Spetznaz, Deprogram, Stand Up
9/3: Boise, Idaho @ Feral House with Twat Trap, Clithero, Poser Love
Idaho show was insane! Feral House was small but comfortable and we set up merch outside while the sun set. TWAT TRAP is the best band of all time. I love teenagers and their unfiltered enthusiasm. I wish so badly that I started playing in bands when I was young. I love my band so much, we are all tuckered out from scream-laughing the whole eight-hour drive. Can't wait to sleep on Mirče's parents' spare bed. The smell of that house is very comforting to me and I'm glad our first stop of tour is familiar because this trip is feeling very b i g.

9/4: Salt Lake City, Utah @ Diabolical Records with Discoid A, Big Baby, Baby Ghosts
Our show was pretty cool. Lots of white dreads but I think we played pretty well and I got A$AP Ferg LP. We have so many cabs and boxes of merch that the extra person in the van (which alternates) has to lay on top of something with six inches between their head and the ceiling. Very squishy in here. Shirts are selling quickly tho so hopefully there will be more room tomorrow when we repack.

9/5: Denver, Colorado @ Club Scum with Barbed Wire, Justinedrugs, Velvet Horns
Played at a cool garage called Club Scum and so many girls, queers, and POC came out and had really intense conversations while I was at the merch table. We sold a ton before our set and twice as much after so we donated $100 to a pal's legal fund and some $ to the house because the show was pretty wild. Everyone knew the words and the boys really did move back when Sadie asked them to. Yeah! We are going to run out of records within the first two and a half weeks is my prediction. Long drive again tomorrow to Kansas City. It's 1:30 am and the van is only half packed because we have *so much merch and cabs and people ahhh.*

9/6: Kansas City, Missouri @ the Matchbox Bar and Grill with the Deacons and Blindside USA
Played with a hardcore band that had some riffs but unrelenting reverb on the vocals. Everyone was losing it and screaming to do an encore and Sadie said we would only do it if all the men left the room. I found this hilarious but of course some white-boy idiot was sulking hard. Can't wait to hear about our misandry on punkgossip.com TBH. Tomorrow we only drive five hours, the shortest stretch since we left. Thank god, honestly. I'm medicated out of my mind and have been trying so hard to practice good self-care but my brain hurts. It's 1:35 a.m. and sticky sweetly hot and I am losing my goddamn mind.

9/7: Springfield Illinois @ Black Sheep with Asthma, Garter, Gush
9/9: Minneapolis, MN @ Riverboat with Utah Jazz, B. Arthur, Naive Sense
9/10: Milwaukee, Wisconsin @ Borg Ward with Youth Crush, Holy Shit, Utah Jazz, Life

9/11: Chicago, Illinois @Weenie Hut Jr's with CCTV, The Bug, Cochina, Tigress

Chicago! Damn! We played a weird show in Milwaukee with a notoriously misogynistic band then bailed immediately to Ralphy's house in Chicago. Woke up, went to the diner, and split up for the first time in days. I got new four-inch heel Doc Martens and a book for the van. We had so much help from strangers loading gear, finding cables, etc. I love the culture of helpful politeness in the Midwest. COCHINA was cool and their singer spoke about assimilation and language and family in a way that made my heart feel very heavy in an old familiar way. TIGRESS had the toughest riffs of any band we have played with on tour so far, and uncompromising lyrics on race and police violence and the spectrum of privilege. *Fuck the police, I hate them all.* Dang, they were sick. The BUG was noisy and crazy and awesome. CCTV is my favorite band in the universe. We played pretty well considering 200 people were smashing into our guitars and it was sticky hot to the point of unbearable discomfort.

Took the BUG out to late night dinner after the show and there was a wildass DJ in a suit playing "Cha Cha Slide." It was awesome, tons of people dancing. I wore my lucky Halloween undies so I knew today was going to be good but damn that was one of the best shows I have ever been to in my life and I had so many tender moments with my friends. Ralph and Peter and Cody are such good people. It is hard having such crucial parts of my life so far away but punk keeps us moving toward each other. I hadn't seen Cody in such a long time and he asked what was new in the last three yrs and I only came up with "started a band, graduated from college, hung out with Mirče every day" and then I had a mushy gushy feeling about how lucky we are to have Mirče on tour. He is so smart and helpful and funny and good. My best friend in the world. It's easy to get hung up on daily frustrations and annoyances but that shit doesn't actually mean anything compared to the feeling of a room full of your best friends' laughter. I am so happy to be here.

9/13: Bloomington, Indiana @ Kroger Castle with Marine Corpse, Dribble, Gel

This town is pretty cool. When we pulled up to Nick's house he was shucking corn which we found hilarious as we had been making Midwest corn farmer jokes all day. The show was strange and felt more like a low-key house party than a punk show. There were some B9 bros who I did not like but also some awesome femme ladies who evened out the energy. We are heading to Kentucky now and have heard bad things about Louisville, so we are prepped for defensive aggression. Apparently somebody called us a band of faggots or something, which is unsurprising in this fuckin' weird corn world.

9/13, continued: Louisville, Kentucky @ Spinelli's with Another Mistake, Pissed On, Miracle Drug, Street Rat, Downside

Kentucky is on a whole 'nother level. Played with a bunch of metalcore bands at a pizzeria which sold a slice of cheese for $4??? I actually had a great time because spin kicks are tight as hell and a moshy broband did a Carry On cover. I did get my head slammed into a Pepsi machine and walked away with a little concussion and split lip, though. Weird vibes for sure.

9/14: Cincinnati, Ohio @ Helltown with Black Planet, Swim Team, Gymshorts

This place has the best guitar stores I have ever been to, what the fuck!! I touched my number one ultimate dream guitar for the first time. Recorded a four-track NEW YEAR'S EVE song with a nice boy whose house we stayed at named Dylan. Too many mosquitoes but otherwise I like it here very much.

9/15: Columbus, Ohio @ 2071 with Didi, Slugbugs, Smut, Sediment Club

I feel nostalgic for places I can't remember and I miss so many people I don't even know anymore. I bought a Gretsch.

9/16: Detroit, Michigan @ Trumbullplex with Touch, Social Werq

It is beautiful here and the air is a familiar kind of cold but our show was a bit of a bust. Too many white people with dreads and huge men push-moshing girls to the floor. Next.

9/17: Crossing the Border

Driving through Canada listening to Neil Young. Mirče is driving and I am in the passenger seat and my heart feels very full and my head feels very tired.

9/17: Toronto, Ontario @ S.H.I.B.G.B.'s with VCR, Cochina, Fathers, Vile Creature

Wow, Toronto was awesome. We played at this cool spot called S.H.I.B.G.B.'s or something crazy. We rolled up and couldn't find the place so I yelled "Where's the show?" out the van window at the first punker we saw. He bugged and ran away. Very weird Canadian vibes but still a good time with good bands. Lots of Asian punks (!!!!) and cool trans women who took up a ton of space in the best way. I'm surprised so many people know all the words to the songs and the riffs and everything. People were screaming and cheering between songs like a real concert. Lots of teary words after our set, which has become the norm. All the long drives and crabby moments are worth it to play to a room packed with people who want and need and ask for your music. Wild. COCHINA friends are literal angels. Sharla came to the show from Vancouver and I saw Tessa and Fred from San Jose. I love my friends! Went to a poutine place called Poutinis, hahahaha.

9/18: Ottawa, Ontario @ Funeral Home with Triage, Sick Nurse, Gaycation

Got slow rolled by a black Lexus and had to hide behind a church. Laid in the middle of a track field while a teenage girl ran laps around me. TRIAGE is a good band.

9/19: Montreal, Quebec with Panzee, Grosser

Today I don't feel entitled to my emotions or the space they take up in other people's lives. I won a rule-of-the-day in our van game so I made Tannrr give a speech before our set, which was very, very funny. Some guy was smoking PCP inside the show, which was very, very sucky.

9/21: Boston, Massachusetts @ Cambridge Elks with Dame, Leather Daddy, Firewalker, Gas Station Girls

Wow, what a fuckin' night! We played an Eagles Hall ballroom which kind of blew my mind 'cause there's not enough punks in the whole of Olympia to fill such a giant room. But wow! The punks were out tonight! Boston is the best because there's this huge crew of femme girls who mosh wicked hard and play in good bands and compliment each other's makeup. I feel very inspired by their love and uncompromising toughness and refusal to move over for the men who want to dominate their scene / lives.

FIREWALKER, holy shit! Sophie sounds deranged, I am obsessed with this band. LEATHER DADDY is the best, I wiggled my butt so much. DAME sounds like riding the bus at 3:00 a.m. feels—dreamy and both comfortable and uncomfortable simultaneously. We played an after show at Boiler Room and pranked Jake 'n Sadie by switching out Corey halfway through "Outcast" so when they looked up Mirče was playing drums and Corey was dancing in the crowd. Afterward I danced until my bones ached then I climbed up a brick chimney to the top of the building. It's surprising how clearly you can see the stars here—isn't light pollution supposed to kill the magic of big cities? Anyway, I looked at the sky for a long time listening to my friends laughing and singing. Tonight was very special. I am thinking about the importance of lighthearted moments in this hellworld and how I want a pink WARZONE shirt like Nessa's.

9/22: Amherst, Massachusetts @ Titannica with Slav, Losin' Brain, Longings
9/23: Brooklyn, New York @ Silent Barn with Aye Nako, Moor Mother Goddess, Cristy C. Road

New York sucks but it was nice to see Michelle and Ben Trogdon. Western Mass was cool. Too many people came so we played in the driveway. It was really dusty and someone stage-dove off a compost bin. A+ would do again.

9/24: Philadelphia, PA @ LAVA Space with Soul Glo and HIRS and @ Gray's Ferry Skate Park with Chondria
9/25: Washington, DC @ Studio 69 with Pure Disgust, Homosuperior, Claws

DC has the best people, best bands, best food. Philly yesterday was very overwhelming. Mostly good I think. Our first show sold out pretty much immediately so we played a second one at midnight in a skate park under a bridge. Picked up 600 more shirts and Greg's awesome enamel/metal pins. JP from Hard Stripes brought us donuts and cinny rolls which saved my life at 2:00 a.m. layin' on the cement with a 20 person merch line. Still never had a cheesesteak and I'm fuckin' ticked about it honestly

9/26: Asheville, North Carolina @ Static Age Records with Crystal Brawl, No Approach, Desperate Measures
9/27: Savannah, Georgia @ Quo Lab with Trophy Wives, Siopticunts

Savannah, Georgia is a hellhole pit of despair full of white feminists who "aren't like other girls" and ugly boys who make rape jokes and call us "whiny cunts." We broke down for a day and walked aimlessly for hours. I cannot wait to leave this place.

9/29: Gainesville, Florida @ Civic Media Center with Gouge Away, Nowomb, Ew

Florida is too sticky hot but there are a lot of young punks. I hate going to bars but air conditioning and pool tables made it tolerable. Played our first of three shows with GOUGE AWAY, who are vegan straightedge and seem very nice. Definitely more melodic HC / PUNCH influenced than most things I listen to but no complaints. They're fun to watch and we haven't played with many hardcore bands so I feel thankful that nobody in a SET YOUR GOALS t-shirt is likely to come see our four shows together. One of the other bands was queer-drummer-bass-freaky-outfit-punk and sounded like home.

9/30: Pompano Beach, Florida @ 4616 Powerline Road with Gouge Away, Night Witch, Insignificant Other, Molly Snow
10/1: Tallahassee, Florida @All Saints Cafe with Gouge Away, Night Witch, So What

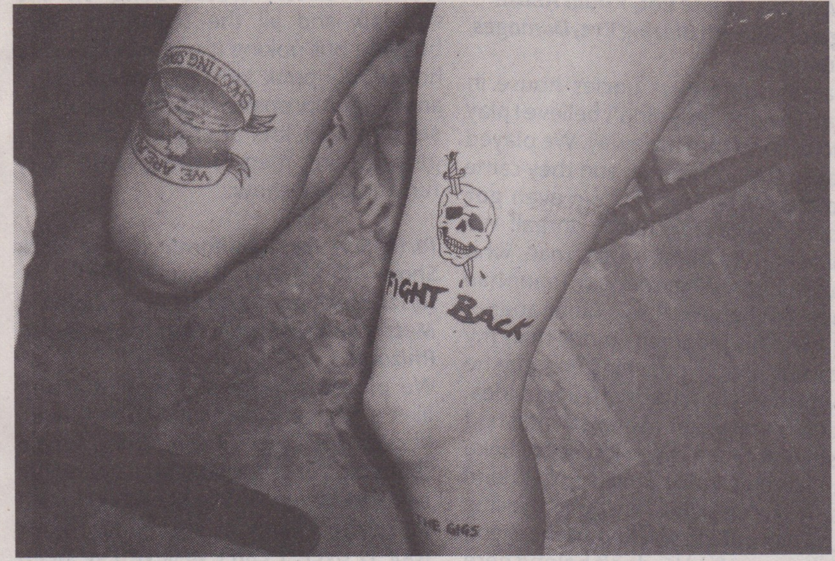
Smashed my phone screen again, oops. Woke up and immediately went swimming two mornings in a row. I genuinely believe that I love to swim the way that parents love their children. I would drop anything any time to be in a body of water. After our PB show I laid on my back in the pool and looked at the moon and thought about the universal sense of marginalization in punk worlds. Everyone feels excluded. Everyone feels traumatized by society's expectations. Playing in a band can be a powerful protection.

10/2: Birmingham, Alabama @ Firehouse 412 with Gouge Away, Deism, Say It!, Snake Church, Insignificant Other

Found a music store about to close down and Tannrr got a Kramer Flying V for $200. Show was cool. INSIGNIFICANT OTHER did a surprise set which was very cool. A girl was wastedddd slamming and head banging by herself in the back room and I was losing it trying not to laugh in a rude way but she was having the time of her life. I've started to realize how much I have a hard time making friends at shows. I spend a lot of time in the van because I don't like feeling people's eyes on me. Some internet man is threatening me. What else is new?

10/3: New Orleans, Louisiana @ Gasa Gasa with Room 101, Population

Show was at a cool record store / bar which is owned by a nice man who plays in that band Thou. A one-man-band played with a projection reel and some pretty cool songs. There was a JOY DIVISION rip-off band that I liked quite a bit even though their style is tired and unsurprising. It is getting cold. Corey met up with her old best bud just to find that they're strangers now. I know the feeling. Everyone knows the feeling. A boy named Jeremy came up to me after our set and said that we are "really changing things" and my zine "made him re-evaluate his role in other people's lives." Hey, thanks Jeremy.



10/4: McAllen, Texas @ Yerberia Cultura with Program, Muk, The Follies, Digi Boys, Los Skagaler@s

10/5: Austin, Texas @ Cheer Up Charlie's with Feral Future, Glue, Common Ignorance, Body Pressure

McAllen was awesome. Saw some cool bands with mostly brown people, which was refreshing. DIGI BOYS were the highlight for sure, freaky TX punk with keys and matching eyewear. They had a lot of fun playing which is always nice to watch. We have been out of records for a few days and it's stressful as hell. We are out of everything, actually. We need to make more shirts like ten minutes ago. Javi housed and fed us tacos which blew my mind.

Austin was so fun! Met a friend named Juan Carlos and his little fluffdog Bowser. It's always so good to see old friends and play with their bands. The venue was called Cheer Up Charlie's and we played outside on a stage that looked like a set for a wildlife documentary. Some guy hit Harris during GLUE and the crew descended upon him like vultures. Caught up with Ben Trogdon and Judd who were both very influential figures in my formative years. We got matching Circle G tattoos finally. I love a matching tattoo more than most things

10/6: Oklahoma City, Oklahoma @ the Shop with Leech, Queequeg, Scathe, American Hate

The show was in a hugeee warehouse-like space with a bar, so the sound was very open and flat but I had a great time! Met a great man named Ross who was selling bootleg buttons and our whole crew unknowingly bought the same one. Cute! A band called LEECH played which had the most unhinged looking guitar player who had the best style and stage moves ever. They slammed with a full-size trans flag during our set. Jake got punched in the face full on and had to play immediately afterward but I think we did okay. We are out of shirts. Still two big shows left, oops. We did pick up the repress of demo tapes though! Ralph and Hayes are the MVPs of this tour for rush-ordering us records and tapes so we didn't fully blow it. New Mexico is completely foreign to me so hopefully it's chill. I am sick as hell coughing and crabby.

//THIRD EYE BLIND – self-titled is my all-time favorite record.

//I have so many ideas for NEW YEAR'S EVE songs but no way to get them out of my head. Can't wait to get home and play my new guitars.

10/7: Albuquerque, New Mexico @ Gold House with Litter Brain and Chicharra

Van broke down again but a nice man named Matt fixed it up quick for free! I love punks. We played a very packed house with a cool six member all girl/femme band who covered 7 SECONDS. I was psyched. Woke up with a horrible, horrible sickness and a squeaky embarrassing lost voice. New Mexico is beautiful and full of nice people and amazing food. And hot air balloons!

10/8: Flagstaff, Arizona @ Headspace with Fleetwood Mac Dre, Coffee Pot, Ritual Abuse

10/9: Los Angeles, CA with Blazing Eye, Damages, Strangers, Fumigados

LA show was at some guys uncles house in South Central. The door guy didn't believe I play in a band and tried to turn me away. We played second because the cops came, and they came back immediately after our set. We even got our own police helicopter, haha! Unreal! We stopped mid-song to fight some man who was being ultra-aggressive to a girl Tannr had just befriended. Whenever I see Tannr angry I freak out. I trust his judgment more than my own so I started blindly punching the guy he was after, which might have been a bad idea. The guy wouldn't let go of my wrist and I had to hit him several times in the chest to make him let go. I have *no* voice at all so I felt kind of helpless. At some point he started yelling *"This is South Central, do you know where you are?"* which is very valid. We don't belong here if the locals don't want us. Our existences and identities are very different from most people at the show. But everyone in the crowd assured us he was being out of line and they kicked him out. I was being electrocuted the whole time we played and got hit in the face with a full beer can. I hate LA so much.

10/10: Bakersfield, California @ Babylon BKFD with Wallflower, SKALV

Got a motel 'n ordered Chinese food. Lots of young decked spiky punks at the venue when we rolled up. Somebody found a silicon breast thing on the sidewalk and all the teenagers were bugging out poking it with sticks. I love how easily punk kids are enveloped in anything improper or out of place. Our set was wild, lots of crowd surfers and girls pushing men to the ground. Very fun and quick show.

10/11: San Jose, California @ the Rock Shop with Pig DNA, Beast, Profile

10/12: Oakland, California @ Oakland Metro with No Statik, Composite, Beast, Rhizome

We played at a *huge* venue that felt like a concert stadium: sound man, backstage, gear crew, the whole shabang. We dropped off Corey and I'm not sure when I'll see her again which makes my heart feel very heavy. Wow, tour is over. I can't believe I've been living in a van for six weeks. Cannot wait to find a place to live and *live in it*.

G.L.O.S.S. is a band from Olympia Washington. They have a new 7" on the way. Hear their music at girlslivingoutsidesocietysshit.bandcamp.com and see them if you ever have the chance.

GAS
NOW
AVAILABLE

+RIP+ S.H.I.B.G.B.'S

Photos & text
by Alex Kress

A venue laid to rest

The Toronto Hardcore Punk Scene announces with sadness, the death of S.H.I.B.G.B.'s.

That's what the funeral program-flyer read for the final show at the short-lived DIY venue. On October 30, 16 bands played what would be their last-ever sets in that space. The show had no set-times—bands drew their names out of a hat and had a ten minute set. Go over ten minutes? Risk having the power cut on you.

Swept under the rug of the west end's industrial Geary Avenue of garages and warehouses, S.H.I.B.G.B.'s sat below street level for a year and a half hosting over 60 shows. During that time, an almost-even split of 170 touring and local bands played. But in the end, the setup of the operation did not favor the long term. A decision was made to draw the curtain on the short, but beloved run of a hub for punk ideals.

S.H.I.B.G.B.'s was the brainchild of Not Dead Yet festival founder Greg Benedetto. With a long and storied past booking shows in transient spaces, he's no stranger to the shutterings of DIY venues. He cut his teeth on spots like the Adrift Clubhouse, and Siesta Nouveaux most recently, which was forced to close in March 2012. A developer bought up the building in a move toward what would've been the biggest condo development in Toronto. Ultimately, the city denied the project, leaving an empty lot where Siesta stood.

Benedetto waxed romantic about the loss. He eulogized the space in a post on his Not Dead Yet Tumblr, which was also published in a zine dedicated to Siesta released at the final shows. At the time, he said no venue meant more to him in all his years in the Toronto scene.

"While I'm certain that the people who have utilized it over the last several years will go on to further contribute and participate in Toronto's musical community, its loss has me wondering if and where such a positive, welcoming, eclectic and supportive space could pop up again in this city, if at all," he wrote.

"If and when it does, I hope it means half as much to those people as Siesta did to our scene."

Two years later, less a day, that's exactly what happened.

And of course, it didn't just happen. Benedetto phoenixed S.H.I.B.G.B.'s from the ashes of Siesta as a labor of love, and with some help. Long-time friend Andy Weaver was one of the first to step up.

"I was pretty much in conversations with Greg from the time we started talking about getting a space that we should do it the best we can, and do it together. Because I knew there was no way anyone was going to do anything like that by themselves."

He says as soon as he saw the space, he knew it would work. He helped build the jam room, bar and slightly elevated stage. And he missed a lot of sets preventing people from hanging out in front, making sure the shows stayed incognito.

Weaver's dedication to S.H.I.B.G.B.'s didn't go unnoticed.

"Andy was always there and always willing to help. He was one of the only people who never found another excuse," says Benedetto.

As another person with a history in the scene, Weaver says the space was the best thing to happen to Toronto's punk community in a long time.

"The amount of participation from kids all over the city—guys, girls, queer kids…it's been phenomenal.

"We were really stuck in a bad wave of the same kind of music and the same kind of bands. Giving them a place to do it was paramount. Those places don't come around that often."

It's true, they don't. But as Benedetto says he knew getting into it, these kinds of spaces are subject to the same capital constructs that everyone else is. And after some time passed, it just became too expensive to run as a business that ultimately wasn't welcome. However, this time it wasn't a condo developer forcing the closure.

"The reality is we were scraping by," says Benedetto.

"It was my decision to not go into further debt. Fact of the matter is that the city wasn't invested in it as a space existing, it was invested in it insofar as it being entertaining to them when it was comfortable for them."

It's a fickleness Benedetto describes as being innately Toronto.

"A lot of people in Toronto have a bit of an inferiority complex. It's a bit of the midwest thing where it's like, we're not New York, we're not Boston, we're trying to find our identity and as a result it causes people to not really invest in anything.

"Maybe that's me sounding a bit bitter, but I do think there's a part of punk where people don't really see the forest for the trees. People would bring their own beer. We were running a bar to save a couple bucks, and the reality is if they were spending a couple bucks at the bar, that would've been the difference", he says.

In the same vein, Benedetto wouldn't have set rules banning bringing in booze. He just held out hope people would get it.

"And it's not to say that they didn't, but the real estate market creates an unfair situation to people like us who are not trying to be something that's based around capital. But the reality is, we're still subject to it and we don't set the prices and we don't set the market. But we have to exist within it."

He feels somewhat ridiculous choosing to give up the space run by a landlord who was down with what they were doing—especially in contrast with the way Siesta fell. S.H.I.B.G.B.'s was hard to find, so to let it go seems illogical in one sense. But he doesn't regret the decision; he'll no longer feel a constant pressure to book shows to pay the rent.

"Maybe some people who frequented the space will feel some sort of hole and they'll have the drive to go do it. That's kind of how it's supposed to work."

Enter: Faith/Void.

That's S.H.I.T. vocalist Ryan Tong's new record shop that, less than a month after opening, doubled as a gallery space with its walls on wheels for the Not Dead Yet art show. When he lost his job in December of last year, Tong visualized the initial concept for the shop as a part of S.H.I.B.G.B.'s. But when the possibility of the venue staying open began to seem grim, Tong started looking elsewhere.

"It really bummed me out initially, and I felt that loss immediately and I was like, 'someone has to do something, someone has to step up, someone has to save this, this needs to keep going.' I remember feeling that so strongly," he says.

Besides playing and rehearsing in the space, Tong was knee-deep in the less glamorous moments. He says he attended all but about three shows in the nineteen months S.H.I.B.G.B.'s put them on, working the bar, keeping the kids in line, and cleaning up vomit.

"I remember one particular instance when I was crushing cans and I put my hand in this like, hot and sour soup," he laughs. "All the stuff people wanna be doing on a Saturday afternoon."

Still, his love for the space affectionately referred to as 'S.H.I.B.'s' (sheebs) by many who frequented it, is pure as the driven snow. "I feel like nothing else has more profoundly engaged me or impacted the way I see things," he says. "It

Dilettantes
The Brain

made music better, it made art better. It engaged people to act on their own and be inspired enough even to just play in a band or go out on a limb. It reinvigorated this energy and this enthusiasm that I hadn't felt toward music and music communities in a long time."

Fuelled by that reanimation, he says he also feels driven to carry on what the community was doing with S.H.I.B.G.B's sheer force of being one of the largest, youngest punk scenes.

"Of everywhere I've been, I've never seen anything quite like it."

Benedetto shares the sentiment; he says after this year's Not Dead Yet festival he was driving London label-runner Paco of La Vida Es Un Mus to the airport when he asked, "How are there so many young bands in Toronto?"

"I kind of drew a straight line to me meeting Warren and putting his band on a show eight years ago to the bands that exist now," he says.

Benedetto says S.H.I.T. guitarist Warren Calbeck got in underage to a Jay Reatard show and was out front smoking. He asked if his then-band Molested Youth could play one of his shows. It sparked several offshoot projects with other young punks—Benedetto named about nine right off the bat—and the rest is history.

"I almost feel like I need to make a family tree of this stuff. All those things happened at Siesta so it's weird that you now can look back in time and say, because of these spaces, these things are able to exist. It's all because these people have hubs to go to."

He says the scene that has disseminated from Siesta and S.H.I.B.G.B's is one that has focused on creating a music community with kids who have grown up in Toronto to contribute as artists in the city.

Sadie Rapson is one of those kids. Having played in several of the bands Benedetto rattled off in the Toronto punk family tree that came from the Siesta womb, she's now been through the closure of both it and S.H.I.B.G.B.'s.

"I know Sadie is at that peak age where she's super radical and she'd probably hate that I say this, but I see a lot of how she thinks and acts in how I used to think and act. So I consider her a very valuable checkpoint in that sense," he says.

"I just see that same sort of bewilderment at the systemic injustice that is pervasive in the world—that sort of, 'how is it possible that no one else is this angry' kind of thing."

Rapson plays guitar in Triage, a band who played its first show at S.H.I.B.G.B.'s. She also got a ton of attention for an uncharacteristically inflammatory night in July at the venue that happened to be recorded. '90s hardcore band Chokehold played, and guitarist Jeff Beckman prefaced a song with thoughts on the Black Lives Matter movement. Rapson accused Beckman of being racist and white supremacist, saying, "police violence disproportionately targets black communities," and that he was "minimizing the impact of police violence on black communities."

Rapson says things escalated and Beckman punched her twice in the face. While it's a situation not representative of the space, she says she felt less comfortable, particularly being a trans woman, in the days that followed.

"It kind of reminded me that my safety even in a punk situation is very much dependent on who else is there." She says it wasn't the usual S.H.I.B.G.B.'s crowd. But for her, that's not the lingering memory that will be its legacy. It's not what the Toronto scene is about.

"We have our own thing going, and what it is might be kind of scattered and a little nebulous, but I think it's still fairly distinctive. Enough so that people travel here from elsewhere to catch the realness."

Triage frontwoman Lia Lepre and Dilettantes bass player Mackenzie Burgess are two other young punks full of piss and vinegar who've come up in that described realness. They've got their own heartstrings attached to S.H.I.B.G.B.'s, having both played first shows with bands there. But they're also pragmatic about the fleeting nature of DIY spaces.

"Even at the beginning I remember Greg saying "well, we'll see how long this lasts'," Burgess says. "But I think in punk there is this sort of sense of urgency that people have. To me, punk's about doing things even though the odds are stacked against you. It was a really great space and it will be missed, but I feel like it was just a space for these things to happen; these things are happening without the space, and they'll continue to happen."

Poser
Hired Goons

Burgess feels the closure is a loss in that there's now one less place to book a show. And it's hard to get a satellite image of a situation while still in the thick of it. But, at the moment, she sees the future of S.H.I.B.G.B.'s lying with Faith/Void, set up to carry the torch.

Lepre echoed that, saying having temporary spaces drives up the intensity, urging people to push boundaries. S.H.I.B.G.B.'s had already opened when Lepre moved back from Montreal, a scene that was, in her experience, inaccessible and uncomfortable. When she got her wheels spinning back in Toronto, she was at as many shows at S.H.I.B's as she could make.

"I think it raised my standard," she says. "It made me experience [that] it's possible to do shows and do them yourself and do them very well. To get people out to them, form bands out of thin air, and not have to rely on someone else to make those things happen. That's really powerful to me. I think I'll maintain that standard going forth with everything I do."

Still, despite healthy doses of contributions from the community, the chaotic lottery-style finale gig at S.H.I.B.'s didn't pan out the way Benedetto had imagined. He expected everyone to hang on right to the bitter end.

"That show was a great example of the space. It was packed when it was comfortable and convenient for everyone, but at the end of the day, at the end of the show, it was a marathon for a very small number of people," he says.

"People played and then they left. So then, what's the investment if no one's really attached to it? Or that's at least not how it appears to manifest. I'm sure people will eulogize and miss it after the fact, but I don't know that as a community we really focused on keeping the space."

Ultimately, he says, what it came down to was that it was unsustainable in its form. His underlying tone consistently being: Toronto's a tough audience to crack. "Just because people don't feel the need to be there 100 per cent of the time, it doesn't mean that they're not invested. But it's certainly that sense of, 'I can't relate to any of this. Because, how am I the only person who thinks it should be this way?'

"I still feel like I can't relate to things, in no different a way than I did when I was 18. Especially in this situation where I get final say, I can't help but feel like I'm a bit of an island, always."

When Siesta closed, Benedetto wrapped up his ode to the space with a foggy look at the future, "It's hard to think about what will happen when Siesta is gone. I keep telling myself that this moment will help galvanize the scene. As trite as it sounds, only time will tell."

And, so it goes.

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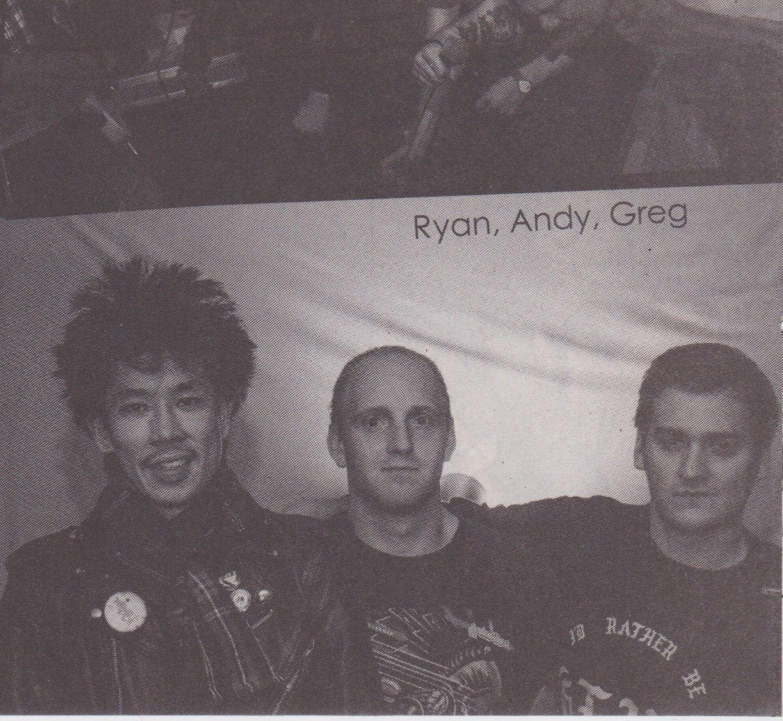
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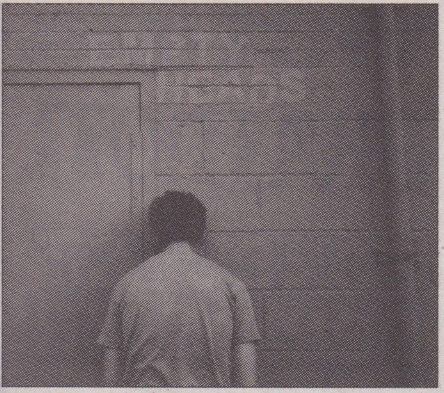

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VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are the doyens of East Anglian hardcore scene, a band that thrashed many a young punk out of their sugar-coated, Fat Wreck bullshit-core malaise over a decade ago. They're still going strong, releasing records and having a great time doing so. Genuine legends in the region, I was sure they must've been interviewed in MRR before but they told me not so I had to remedy this injustice! Slapping a copy of their new split with the Domestics on the turntable I fired a few questions at lynchpins Sam (drums) and Jay (vocals).

Interview and introduction by Jimmy Shitbeans.
Photos courtesy of the band.

MRR: So what can you tell us about Volunteers? How long have you been together? Who does what in the band? Why do you seem to have one guitarist at some gigs and another at other gigs (and sometimes both!)?

SAM: Volunteers have been together for about twelve years now. Currently we have become a kind of co-operative of different bass players and guitar players who we call upon when we're offered a gig. Most of the members play in other bands too so can't always do stuff. This is working out really well and makes it a lot of fun...we just recruited an old bass player James as Towel has moved to Leeds...so there's always the possibility we could have two guitarists and two bass players at future gigs!

JAY: I get pissed up and everyone else drives me about!

MRR: Which of your releases are you most proud of?

SAM: I'm very proud of it all really...it covers different eras. *Doesn't Make you Punk* is more straightforward lo-fi fast punk, but we got faster over time and more brutal. I like it all. *Ringing Ears* is the most mental. New stuff is heavier.

JAY: I think I'm the most proud of the fact that we just keep doing it, all get on really well, and have fun; the records are a by-product.

MRR: What do you make of the recent UK election result? Is UKIP on the rise? Are we doomed under a now solely Tory government? Will there be an even further lurch to the right? Do you think the Lib Dems' influence in the coalition will be noticed now or not? Is there any room for more "progressive" parties to make headway in the future?

SAM: I despair at British politics, I have to be honest. All the main parties seem to be right wing, and suck up to big business corporations. The population seem to be largely left wing / liberal it seems to me, but maybe they don't realize it? British people are essentially an amicable lot, I don't think there is a stomach for extremism, but the press have a hold over people and lie and scare them, and distract them with shit. It's so complexingly fucked up [that] I don't know where to begin, and there's no sign of real positive change, especially with the Tories back in. In the long run as far as I can see all humans will be losers however much cash they got in the bank.

JAY: I think that folk need to work on their pineal glands. The media did a great job of convincing "hard working families" that they would be better off financially under a Tory Government. Not only did voters fall for it but they were selfish enough to tick their box. UKIP and Conservatives are one and the same in my mind. UKIP got what they wanted with an EU Referendum; we'll end up staying in but with a stronger anti-European swing after the event much like we witnessed after the Scottish Referendum is my feeling. Not good!

MRR: Some of you are involved Hardcore Upraw, putting on great sweaty gigs in a small rehearsal space. How did that come about? How long have you been doing it?

SAM: Me and Jay decided to put gigs on years ago as a way of supporting other hardcore bands we knew and loved. We've been through a few venues, the current rehearsal space being the best as it's proper DIY, bring your own booze, tiny and a bit scary at times, but lovely and friendly and positive. Think we started it ten years ago, maybe more.

MRR: Sam, you used to play in John Peel favourites, Jacob's Mouse. Any good memories from those days? What happened with the band? Was there an acrimonious split or did it just fizzle out? Did you ever meet Peel?

SAM: Jacob's Mouse were going from '88 to '96-ish, though I had played with Jebb and Hugo since the age of eleven. We started being into metal but gradually developed into a more noisy psychedelic grungy thing…bit hard to describe what we were like, except we were focused on breaking musical boundaries and rules, and we had a load of rules we stuck to. Although we were quite successful for a time it was probably this bloody mindedness that stopped us being more successful—still I'm proud we stuck to our principles and never sold out!

I did meet John Peel several times, he was incredibly supportive. We were chosen to represent the letter J in a series of short documentaries about his record collection, which was such an honor for us. In typical fashion the band went upwards, hit a peak, then came crashing down. The press loved us one minute, hated us the next (reluctantly giving us good reviews for records / live shows etc., showing how fickle it all is), and as a band I think we lost a united focus and starting to split off so we decided to call it a day and do other things.

MRR: Jay, you run Hardcore Hobbies in Bury St Edmunds. How would you describe that? An extreme sports shop? I'm not that sporty so I have no idea! How long has that been going? Do you think there is any crossover or similarity between being involved in punk and running your own business or do you think the two things are completely contradictory? I see you're stocking records and CDs now. Why have you started doing that? How's it going?

JAY: I guess Hardcore Hobbies is a "Lifestyle" or "Alternative Sports" store (although I see the "sports" we cover more as art forms…). We specialize in BMX and skateboard products but also carry a bunch of clothing footwear and other stuff; we've been trading now for sixteen years.

I've been riding BMX since the age of 9, it was at a BMX Race at an early age that I picked up a copy of *Thrasher* mag; this opened my eyes to skateboarding and punk. The main focus of the shop was never to make money as such, although things move on and I now have a family to worry about. The balance between capitalism and community is something I'm very mindful of. Skate park sports (or art forms!) I feel are a very positive thing. Unlike most other sports there is no right or wrong. What you see on the TV is not really a true representation of what a majority of skaters/riders aspire to and it's more about having fun with friends. The store enables us to work with the local skate park putting on events and gigs [and] we do our best to support the grass roots brands and work with them as much as possible.

Ten years ago we sold CDs but when the download boom hit it killed it for us. Now [that] vinyl has made a comeback we've started retailing in music again…It's going really well and is something we love to do, I still get people in their mid twenties saying they got their first Black Flag CD or whatever from us, and that it turned them on to a world of underground music. It's things like that that keep me doing what I'm doing.

I feel that running the store is the right path for me right now, [though] it does require a little soul searching from time to time. If I wasn't comfortable doing what I'm doing I'd be doing something else for sure!

MRR: You have a song on the *Haiku Fucks* compilation 7" called "Straight Edge Kids Make Me Wanna Binge Drink." What's behind that?

JAY: It just got a little bonkers at gigs locally for a while, we had a promoter putting on "Tough Guy" bands. You know the score, people getting hurt and threatened at the shows and all that bollocks...the song was definitely directed at certain individuals in the scene and I pissed a few people off around that time, being very outspoken about the negative impact it was having. Luckily the whole thing disappeared up its own arse and we don't really see that kind of thing anymore

MRR: What's the punk/hardcore/DIY scene like in East Anglia? Who/what should people check out if they're new to the area or just want to know more about what's going on there?

SAM: The hardcore scene in East Anglia is very positive, dedicated, but quite small, though Norwich has a really good scene. Bury St Edmunds itself has a great music scene in general, but leans more towards indie rather than punk and metal, but it's still really good for a little Tory town.

JAY: To answer this question honestly I'd have to say you can keep up to date with what's going on via Facebook... Sad but true, if you're not a Facebooker you miss shit! Sorry that's not a cool answer, deffo the easiest way to get a feel for what's happening and where.

MRR: You've been around for some years now and I've met East Anglian punks in their twenties and early thirties for whom Volunteers were a genuinely pivotal band who opened up their minds to harder sounds than the Green Day/Offspring kind of stuff that had introduced them to this thing called punk – why do you think you're held in such esteem by these people? How do you feel about that?

SAM: I think it's lovely we are held in such high esteem. I like to think it's because we are unpretentious, down to earth, always had a positive message, and even though the music is fucking brutal it is for fun (if you like that sort of thing…you'll get it). We are not really a stereotype punk band as we don't dress in a particular punk image—we share a punk ideology about living your life how you want to, in a positive peaceful manner that embraces all people; outside of the system as much as you can, we are not tribal. Don't get me wrong, when I was a younger man I used to have an image that would fit in with the music, but as time has gone on and I've embraced philosophies like Taoism I see less of a need to draw attention to myself and even give much thought to how I dress. This is a personal thing and I think it's brilliant whatever you want to wear, whatever image you want to project…you've got to be yourself…what I love about punk is historically you had a wide range of different looking people and no one judges each other. This is what hardcore is about to me. I think in East Anglia the scene is great because it's not cliquey like some hardcore scenes—everyone is welcome and no one is judged, everybody will be respected and valued, just like it should be.

JAY: We've been doing this a long time [and] people respect that I think. There wasn't anyone else in our area doing anything like what we do when we started all those years ago. I think it's true that we switched quite a number of people on to the faster side of punk, I think that it's great, and it's something I'm proud of.

MRR: Have you done much touring? Tell us about the "East Anglian Hardcore Tour."

SAM: We have done a bit of touring over the years—it's bloody hard work to sort them out- but always great fun when you do! The EA tour was with ourselves, the Domestics and Casual Nausea. It was such fun, we did it over two long weekends and it would have been lovely for it to be longer!

JAY: We should do Europe!

MRR: At least three of you play in other bands besides Volunteers. Can you tell us a bit about those bands, what they're up to and what they have planned?

SAM: I play in a band called the Machismos which originally formed eighteen years ago when Jacob's Mouse split up, but only lasted eighteen months before I was burnt out with music and had had enough! There was always a bit of interest in the band though, and some of the recordings got re-released, so I decided to reform the band about a year ago and do some new tunes and that. It's different to Volunteers in that it's not as brutal straight hardcore punk; it's more diverse but still riff-driven. I also play in a Dub duo called Zen Reggae Masters that plays minimalist reggae dub bass and drums, very dark, repetitive and for meditation!

JAY: I play guitar and sing in Rats As Big As Dogs...kind of a '90s style post-hardcore noise punk band. We've done three CD-R EPs and have a couple of tracks coming out on vinyl releases later this year. I've also started twatting about with a synth-punk solo thing called Italian Books... hope to do this live as soon as I've got the tunes together.

MRR: For the uninitiated, what would you say Volunteers sound like? What are the influences that emerge in your sound?

SAM: Volunteers are very fast, the band we are most like is probably Siege.

JAY: Thrash punk! (I think?)

MRR: How do you think the UK punk/hardcore scene compares to other countries like the U.S., Japan etc.? Mainland Europe even…

SAM: Some parts of the UK have fantastic hardcore/punk scenes—i.e. Sheffield. Other parts of the country are dead. I imagine Europe/USA/Japan are the same…but who knows? Often what makes a scene is a group of people who just stick with putting on gigs for years and it grows. You need a hub of people with conviction and the knowhow and dedication to make it work and for a scene to grow out of. Some towns have these people, others don't.

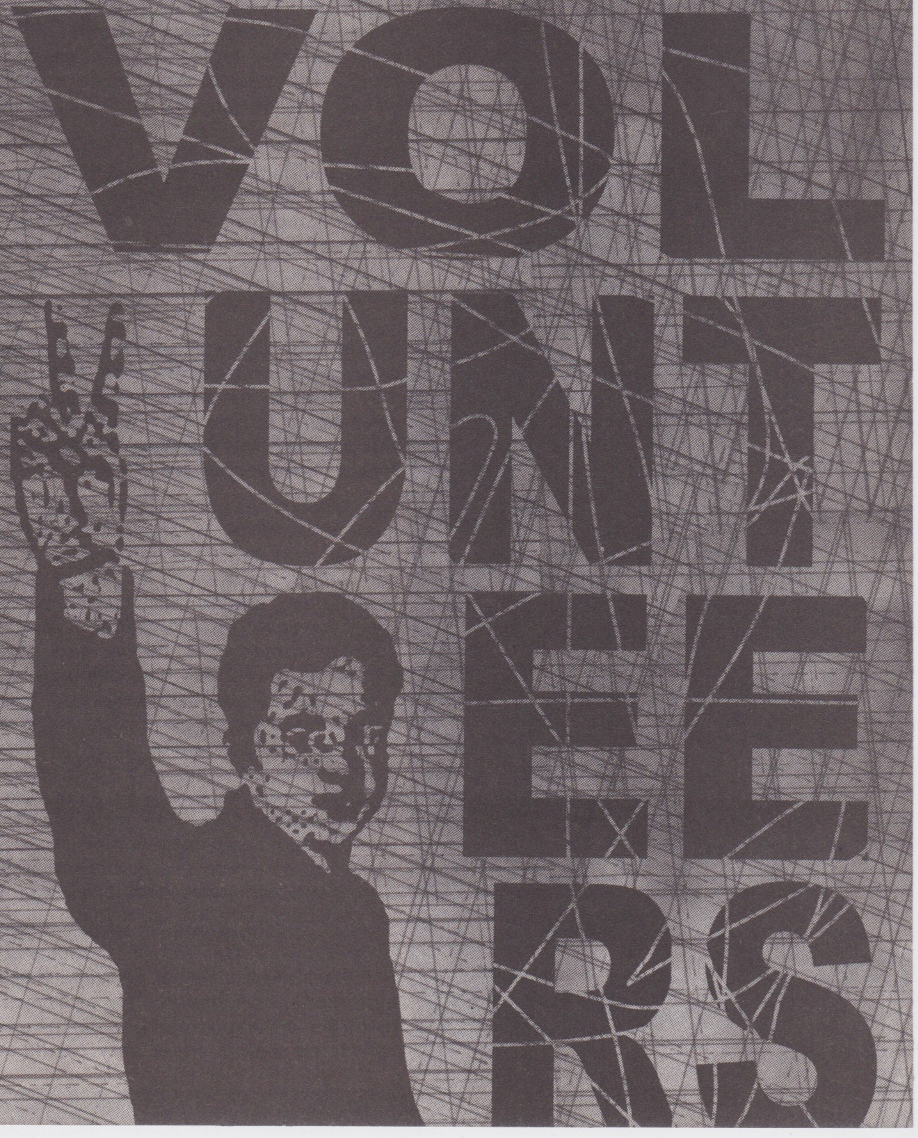
JAY: Tough for us to answer, we need to get out more!

MRR: OK, so what's next for Volunteers? Will there be a new album anytime soon? Any tours coming up? Anything else we should know about?

SAM: The talk is that Volunteers will continue to exist and gig as a co-operative of members, but I don't think we will be writing any new tunes, so as far as releases go, the split with the Domestics will be our last release. We plan on resurrecting old tunes and playing them live again, but the band is such a loose set-up now we rarely get to rehearse before a gig let alone write new stuff!

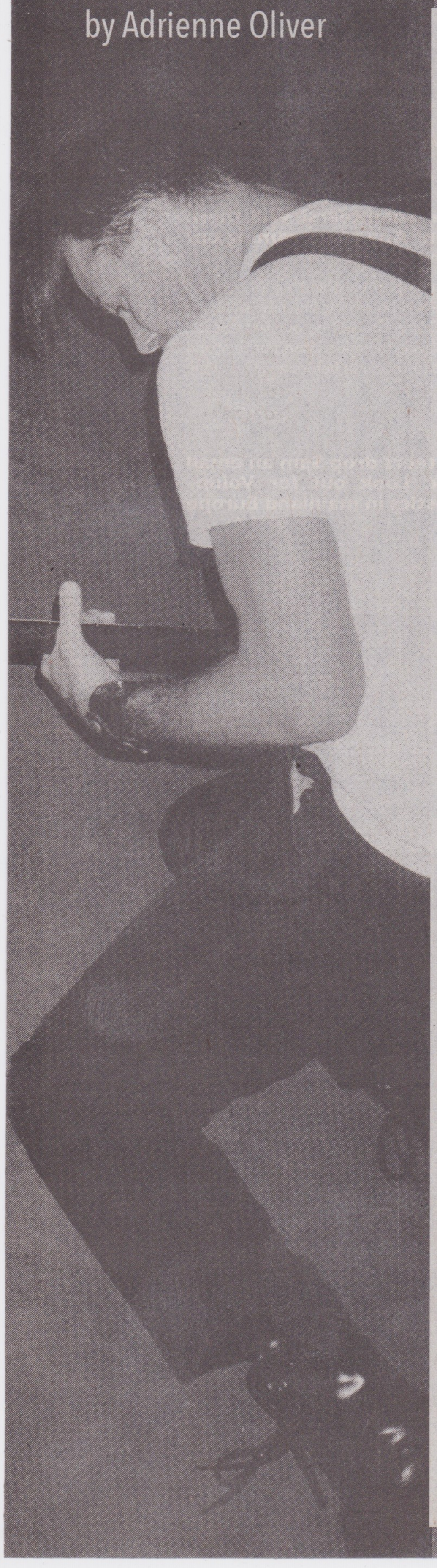
JAY: I call a band meeting!

If you want to contact Volunteers drop Sam an email at samlmarsh2@yahoo.co.uk. Look out for Volunteers on tour with the Domestics in mainland Europe at the start of May 2016.



Punk is for All Ages, All the Time: Room 101

by Adrienne Oliver



Room 101 is a "one-man punk-rock pipe bomb" designed and performed by Roburt Reynolds. The set is only 17 minutes, where he strangles a guitar, screams and howls over backing tracks with programmed drums, recorded bass guitar, and samples that fill the song gaps. A film, also edited by Roburt, projects over him, flashing corresponding bursts of horror and social commentary. Originally from Chicago but now living, teaching high school full-time, and performing in New Orleans, Roburt recently put on an all-ages DIY show with Downtown Boys, locals PantyWasted and Special Interest.

Armed with closed-toed shoes, headphones, and our trusty sling, my infant daughter and I round the corner of Poland St. in the Bywater neighborhood of New Orleans. "Kid-friendly" the poster exclaimed, though I'm now positive this was a call to the under-21 set as opposed to the infant crowd. The night is thick; the air like a pool of heat and we, the hopeful, swim out in the dark hoping for a bit of magic.

Roburt greets me at the door, excitedly. His welcoming smile is in stark contrast to his ever-considering, rebellious mind lurking beneath the surface. He's nervous about the visuals; he didn't want to overwhelm the baby. It's comments like these that reveal another of Roburt's contradictions: radical knowledge can't be forced. The masses can't be led to the truth water; rather, they must be thirsty and seek refuge.

We wander the space, surveying the scene. New Orleans is like no other place on earth. Roburt conceived Room 101 in many iterations and many cities before, but something about New Orleans makes it different. He has touched on this in our talks.

You're from Chicago, and you've identified the significant impact that has had on Room 101, both in its genesis and sound. How does being in New Orleans alter or change this project? How has New Orleans been different than everywhere else?

New Orleans has added a completely new element to the show. My show is obviously complicated and can transform a space's overall vibe quickly because of its general aesthetic. New Orleans has an interestingly fragmented set of scenes for how small it is in population. Some of the scenes do overlap, though. Some nights, the only shows happening are at bars, places that are established and cater to a general sound or expectation. There are some big touring acts that overcharge, at the House of Blues level. There are also generator shows here in abandoned strip malls, a possible show under an industrial bridge or off down a levee on other nights. There are house party shows, impromptu practice space shows that go out by text only, within two hours of show time.

New Orleans makes this project possible by making me have to work harder than ever to make a song, a flier, a recording, a show, or a performance happen in any capacity. I'm already a one man operation, one of the only reasons some people are actually paying any attention, understandably so, like: "What the fuck is wrong with that guy?!" Nonetheless, you have to have a strong work ethic to make things happen and that's part of the larger picture. If we're not in charge of these things and making them happen in ways that challenge the status quo to threatening degrees, then they will continue to just absorb into the status quo. If we're not challenging that absorption, then it is totally possible that art, music and performance can just masturbatorily exist with no real form of progressive value, even if that "progressive value" is as simple as having actual fun, without monetary compensation or recognition.

Looking around now, the overlapping scenes are visible. There are homemade hot plates for sale, chicken and sides. There's a mother manning the hot grill on the sidewalk, expertly preparing chargrilled oysters to rival the Quarter tourist traps while managing the brood of children who follow behind her. I drink a $1 PBR just outside the entrance, as I feed my infant daughter; we are both desperate to stay cool in the late July heat. Young people of varying ages run around the space and at random, chasing each other. Adolescent, neighborhood girls sell two-color, screen printed posters of the event that they made at New Orleans' Community Print Shop, a DIY center for locals.

Rob speaks to this blending: *"Lots of so-called humans compartmentalize themselves by behaving as though they are somehow a true purist by having allegiance to a single, codified genre or lifestyle. This can only make you dedicated or 'true' to close-mindedness and having a boring personal interest palette. I find it disconcerting and short-sighted when people are so quick to throw divisive walls between things that have more in common than in contrast."*

And this is New Orleans: a seemingly dysfunctional mix of blue-collar people of all colors, mixing and mingling on a corner, all with a little something to offer the other. This is DIY: born from what you have, what you can carry with you, what you can take when you leave.

Then, it's time.

It is in spaces like these that Roburt Reynolds comes to life, and where my infant daughter gets her first taste of punk. Like the space in which he now performs, Room 101 One Man Band is at once bare, exposed, and whimsically charming. This glorified garage, The Rookery, has walls, fans, and is a popular DIY space. A pipe awkwardly juts into the entrance and a broken pinball machine sits under the lone overhead light. Roburt flails and flips; the dark space lit only by his projections. I asked Roburt about the incomparable performance he gives.

"I guess simplistically, Room 101 is a performance of extreme arrangement, planning, absolute spontaneity and there is certainly duality in that. It's kind of acting, it is performance and it's definitely real. I'm not saying that I'm going through something important but I'm definitely going through something while performing."

Unlike the obligatory, yet deserved applause performers before him received, between songs his stunned audience just stands, waiting, bearing witness. As if stuck in Room 101 themselves, downloading information and rattling their brains into a new understanding. "Exterminate adults!" he screams, the childlike nature of his message hitting me hard and as the 17-minute doctrine unfolds, the world is brand-new to those who are partaking.

Roburt summarizes: *"Realistically, I probably lose five pounds every 17-minute performance. I'm cathartically into it. If you watch me, you miss the film. If you watch the film, you miss what I'm up to, and who knows what that may be! I can't warm up during the set and I can't slow down. There is an element of it that is so over the top, it could be considered a mask, crutch, gimmick, or whatever. It's also unique in presentation for what it is. In certain aspects of performance, it is a total escape, but that is at a primal echelon, in a primordial memory. I project a full-size film, edited to correspond to the music over me down to the second, so with the epilepsy laser-light in my eye, in the hot seat onstage, feeling the music pumping through my body when it's loud enough, it's absolute real-deal transcendentalism. I've searched for that shit half my life."*

Exiting the space, we pass Hollise, an awesome personality, happy and wide-eyed, the frontman for New Orleans' Fat Stupid Ugly People. The audience tonight is far more diverse than many regular local shows. The crowd easily blurs lines between masculine and feminine, but is unshakably white. I'm reminded of my talks with Roburt. I questioned the appreciation and possibilities for resonance of a DIY punk scene in "The Chocolate City." Hopefully, I wondered aloud if young people more familiar with hip hop and trap rap might "get" the one man band concept.

I like the conversations I've shared with MCs, and the way hip-hop altered my perspective. What correlations exist between the lone MC and the one-man band?

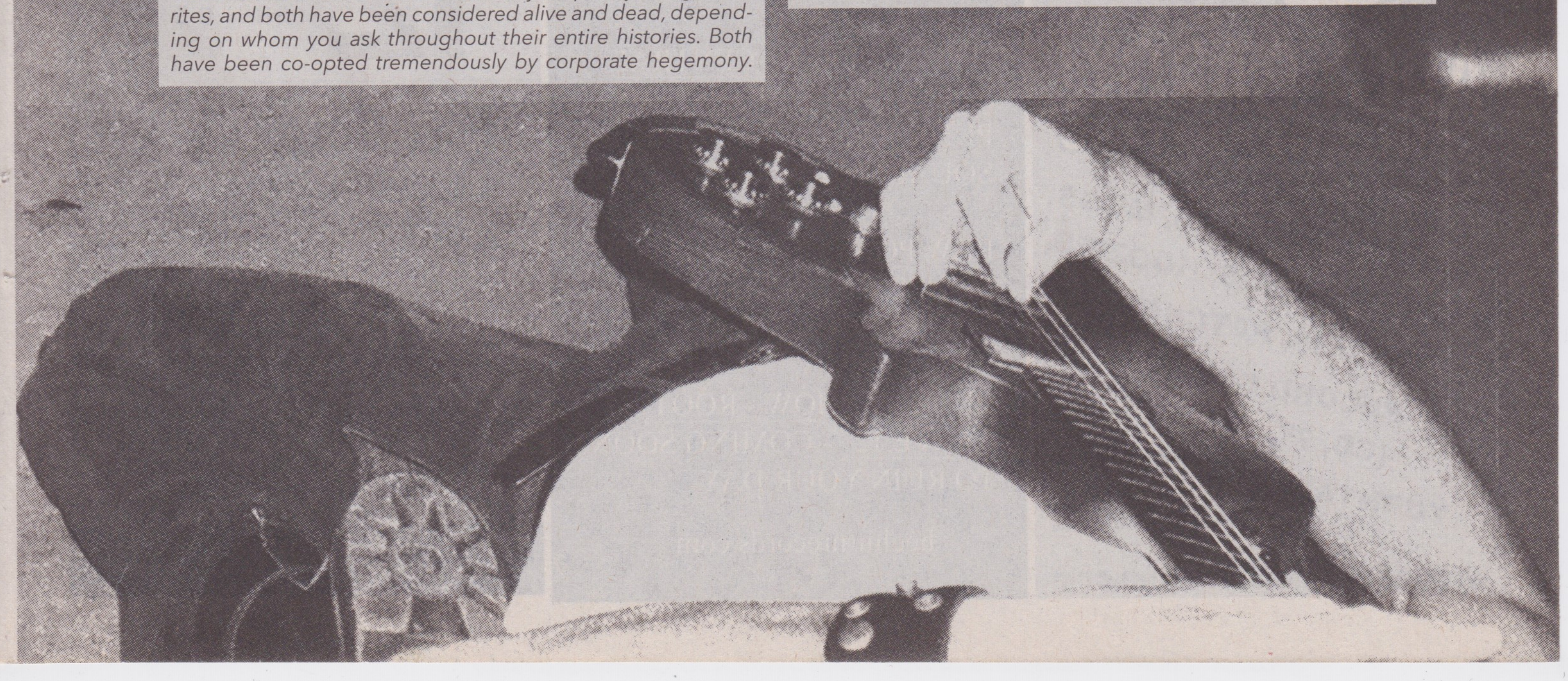
At a DIY level they are nearly exactly the same; the hustle is all you have to propel your trajectory, wherever it is leading. Both of these art forms stole my attention and obsession before I was ten, that's for sure, though. Hip-hop culture has a huge connection to punk music on a cultural upstart level in American societal history and I personally know lots of punks who secretly (and not-so-secretly) love hip-hop and rap music of all eras! Be not ashamed! Both were started by people who were in some form or fashion on the outskirts of American popular acceptance and were fed up with status quo norms as expressed through antiquated formats (albeit under different forms and norms of necessity and accessibility). Both have had social movements that have operated as DIY level upstarts in community spaces throughout their entire histories, at their purer times without the help of "the industry." Both are descendants of American Blues, soul, jazz, poetry, indigenous rites, and both have been considered alive and dead, depending on whom you ask throughout their entire histories. Both have been co-opted tremendously by corporate hegemony. Both still have practitioners that discover them (the art forms) or use them dearly for creative expression without any desire for payment, fame, or flagrant notoriety. Some may agree with this, some will vehemently disagree. But the conversation has already started! Why did Glen E. Friedman take pictures of Public Enemy wearing Minor Threat shirts in the early 1980s?? Punks are still finding ways to steal electricity to put on shows, the same way that Kool Herc's Sound System parties in South Bronx parks did in the mid 1970s.

Roburt thanks us on the way out, telling baby girl, "You were my favorite attendee." We leave to the dulcet tones of a melodic tune, and the true impact of Room 101 is felt. Roburt eschews that which he (we) have been taught: about Santa Claus, about democracy, about our ancestors. But this evolution, this graduation to true understanding comes with having once been duped. I consider the responsibility of us all, of the enlightened, to liberate the minds of the misguided. In Roburt's words, "Those who have lost hope in the kids have forgotten what it was like to be a kid and would do well to volunteer somewhere; do something to help pull young people up. It's so rad and rewarding to help young people. Don't forget that kids started rock'n'roll and punk and even younger ones started hardcore. Seriously, help the kids find their way up. Or just do us all a favor and fucking die. If you're not willing to help a kid but you're willing to complain and then complain some more about them and how they're not you—go die. Dig a hole and fucking stand in it and wait. Your casket is already sealed."

Punk music is a simple, yet poignant questioning of all that we know and all we've been taught. It's an expression of a desire to understand what's real, true, and tangible in the world. It's a rejection of all unessential things. Punk is for young black boys in Central City who think banging is their only way out. Punk is for people who've never thought of it. Punk is for toddlers, falling off bikes, eating dirt, and pushing playmates. Roburt says, "It's so easy for young people to get access to the uber-plastic version of the counter-culture because so many subcultures have been commodified to larger degrees than ever before. Mall culture has taught multiple generations, now, that you don't need to search hard to find anything real, which is obviously total bullshit and the kids are learning this, as they always have. It's an attempt to make people believe in "The Product" lie. *So, fuck Bourbon Street.* Anything timelessly good is worth the search." The message is pure and true at heart: Own your body, own your mind, question everything, trust yourself, free yourself. In essence, punk rock is for all ages at all times.

Tonight, baby girl heard the truth. I look down at her, her sweaty wisps flat to her head, swept to one side, like a mini-Roburt Reynolds. A new kid was at the show tonight.

Room 101 (one man band) just released a new 7" record on X-Mist/Beau Travail Records. Check out more at roburtreynolds.bandcamp.com, youtube.com/roburtreynolds and facebook.com/room10101, or email room10101@hotmail.com.



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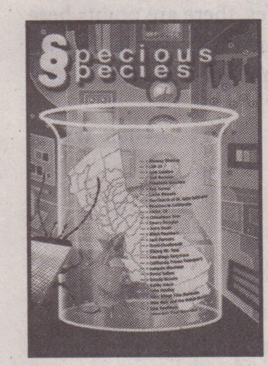


Specious Species #7
Joe Donohoe
282 pages | $8
speciousspecies.net

The zine so huge it reads like a book, *Specious Species*, has favored us with this, the seventh issue. The theme, "California," is so broad no one publication or even bookshelf could do it justice. Still, the regional focus is because "I think there is something to place and it's a resistance to the world wide web concept where everywhere in anywhere." Editor and main contributor Joe Donohoe casts a wide net. Literary stars of the twentieth century receive the most attention, but the nearly-300 pages allow for a wide variety of history and some relevant fiction.

The largest piece by far is the fifty-page (!) biography of Oakland's Jack London. To be fair, he packed a lot of living into forty years. Before he was a famous writer, he tried working, but didn't take to it. It was worse then, and in general it's no prize now. He tried his hand at oyster pirating, and, using the boating skills he'd picked up in the Bay, prospecting in the Alaskan Gold Rush. It's exciting history like this, skillfully told, which makes me excited for this zine. The oyster beds were owned by the Southern Pacific Railroad, and ripping them off "was as dangerous and violent as running meth is now." Most everyone who made money in the Alaskan gold rush were the people selling supplies way the fuck up in the bush (like Donald Trump's grandpa), not the guys with the pan in the river. London made it back alive, and his ability to turn these experiences into narratives people would pay for made all the difference in his life. Donohoe is quite familiar with London's writing, and engages with critical perspectives. To his detractors, much of London's work is a paean to white supremacy and American imperialism. Donohoe finds places where this is true, but also wonders how his fiction could be so popular around the world if it's just hyping white people and the US. Drinking like hell has much to do with his early death. There are many instances when I'm more interested in an artist's biography than their work, and that's the case here.

This is also true regarding the interview with Marin County poet Gerald Nicosia. Perhaps in some circles he's known for his own work, but much of this talk concerns Nicosia's biographical subject, Jack Kerouac. Personally, I'm not much for fiction and don't care about Beat literature. Nicosia, a great admirer of Kerouac's writing ("innovative in style and content," he says) dishes the dirt on the man and his circle. Kerouac was a shit to anyone unfortunate enough to marry him. He ditched out on the first wife when she wouldn't get an abortion, then told people it wasn't his kid, when he knew it was. He wed a second time so the bride would care for his dying mother. At least her family ended up with his vast estate.

A more uplifting story is a lesser-known figure on the outskirts of the scene, Eddie Balchowsky. He lost his arm fighting fascists in the Spanish Civil War, and returned home strung out on morphine. In Chicago he got busted and did five years. Nicosia says the law in Illinois forbade felons from displaying their artwork in galleries (?), so Balchowsky hung his paintings in alleys, and became known for his piano playing. Nicosia contrasts Balchowsky and other poets of the time with writers who cashed in on Beat notoriety. He says their commercial success was inversely proportional to the artistic merit of the work. "Beat became something to market fancy leather jackets with." While I appreciated these sentiments, some too-typical older-guy style is apparent when he discusses a successful North Beach nightclub operator, Lu Anne Henderson. To him, her "real claim to fame" wasn't her own business and hard work, but having fucked some Beat guys as a teenager.

Berkeley orthodontic osteopath Rhoney Stanley alludes to a similar dynamic in discussing her long relationship with superstar LSD chemist Owlsey "Bear" Stanley. Upon first meeting the young Rhoney, Owsley introduced himself by grabbing her breast and saying "You're foxy." Ms. Stanley comments on the gender dynamics in her subsequent scene, the Grateful Dead Family. "The Beat women were even more subjugated than the hippy women." While there is talk of hanging out with legendary hippies, I was more interested in which drugs are "good." Donohoe, being a nurse with experience in prisons, homeless shelters, and psychiatric facilities, is able to keep up with Stanley's discussion of drug properties. She further emphasizes the criminality (in the moral, not legal, sense) of major pharmaceutical producers.

Staying in the late '60s and into the '70s, Donohoe interviews Emory Douglas, an early member of the Black Panther Party. He was largely responsible for the graphic design of the Party newspaper, skills he picked up at City College of San Francisco. He had a hand in every edition they published, almost 400. He shares insight as to the early days and ways of the Panthers, even the origin of the Panther symbol—taken from Southern high school sports teams! Douglas stayed with the Party until its official demise in 1980, but continues making radical artwork to this day. "[A]t the core," he says, "institutions are run with the same racist mentality as the Sixties."

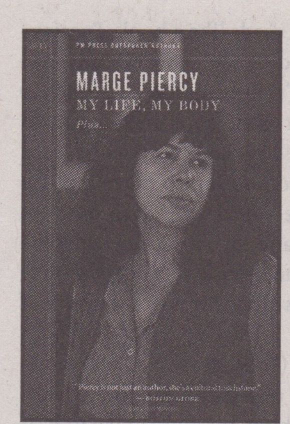
My strongest disagreements reading *Specious Species* came during the interview with author David Talbot, who wrote *Season of the Witch*, a history of San Francisco's wild and violent period spanning the mid-1960s to the mid-'80s. Talbot does a good job of illustrating the tensions that existed in the city before the hippie invasion of the mid '60s. The murders of Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk in their offices at City Hall in 1978 were seen as the apex of a disastrous era. Barely a week before, a formerly-local preacher, Jim Jones, led nine hundred people to their death in Jonestown, Guyana. Many of the dead had relocated directly from the Bay Area. While Moscone and Milk are seen as liberal martyrs for progress, generally forgotten is how Moscone owed his election to voter fraud perpetrated by Jones, and that the three were close political allies. Talbot and Donohoe get at a more honest assessment, in which Jones is an intergral part of the triumvirate. I didn't finish *Season of the Witch*, 'cause when somebody starts saying something nice about Diane Feinstein, I'm out, and the book ends with her as a hero who holds the city together. Fuck that and fuck her. Talbot says he does subscribe to "a lot of the left-wing critique [of her rule]… not only as mayor but as Senator [a post she currently holds]…She was part of the process by which San Francisco has become very difficult to live in if you're not well off." (Emory Douglas, the former Black Panther graphic artist, says the only reason he's still in San Francisco is because his mom bought the house he lives in.) Talbot emphasizes Feinstein's policies as mayor around the devastating AIDS crisis, which were ahead of the rest of the country. (That is to say, not explicitly murderous.)

Another vile pig is Bill Graham. Talbot says Graham believed "music is essential to life," and lived this dream with his shows at the Fillmore and Winterland. Talbot allows that "Graham was megalomaniacal and greedy, and a complete asshole in many ways." But, he claims, Graham had "a huge heart," and was "a tough parent figure, but he provided tough love too." Donohoe recognizes from his time in the punk scene that "punks hated Graham…but I'm open-minded enough to see what he did right…violence was absent or kept to a minimum." This is all bullshit. Graham's love of music never stopped him from calling the fire marshal to shut down any show, however small, that might compete with his. He had total contempt for anyone attending his venues, be they punk, hippie or otherwise. His bouncers were notorious, not for their huge hearts or tough love, but for beating the ass of anyone who didn't move fast enough when they said. People go to shows to *get away* from "tough parent figure[s]." At my bookstore job, whenever his autobiography comes in, I make sure to draw a helicopter crashing into high-tension wires inside, to celebrate his death. Penelope Houston is interviewed separately, and she's asked about playing Winterland with the Sex Pistols. She seems kind of sick of talking about it, and it wasn't a high point of the issue.

Southern California freaks and success stories get some attention too. I really enjoyed "San Diego Satyricon," a memoir-style piece by Erick Matthews. It mostly concerns scoring and doing drugs in the '70s and '80s. Like Rhoney Stanley, he says acid was cool and speed fucked up the scene. The opening line is "I fuckin [sic] hated growing up in San Diego…" The tale closes with Matthews sitting in a nearly-empty apartment, waiting to move away when his buddy comes by, asking to use the phone to round up a murderous posse. Even more desolate is "Trans-corp: Out of California," by Michael Glynn, the story of his forty-hour van ride in the hands of a private prisoner transportation service. The food and the company are pretty grim. He feels like he's being released when he's let out at the prison in Yuma, Arizona! And the freakiest success story of them all may be Jack Parsons. An only child, wealthy and spoiled, as a teenage science nerd he and his friend are into rockets. It being the 1930s, rocketry is a hobby, considered without potential by mainstream scientists. Living in Pasadena, it's easy enough for them to head over to Throp Polytechnic Institute. Throp was the humble beginnings from which the science giant Caltech would grow. Self-taught but a genius, Parsons soon is part of the "Suicide Squad," whose technical ability gave rise to the modern American aerospace industry. Some squad members were able to channel their interest into lucrative gigs. Parsons, however, had no formal education in science, and wasn't able to fit in with a bureaucracy. Left to his own means, he scrambled to make money. He kept busy, though, indulging his spiritual side at a local branch of Aleister Crowley's Ordo Templi Orientis. A profligate spender, Crowley was desperate to cash in on greater Los Angeles' money spiritual seekers, as he knew others had already done. A big party with sex and drugs will make most any cult seem better, and this was part of the Crowley lifestyle. Parsons was soon running his own temple. Future Scientologist founder L. Ron Hubbard became a member, before leaving with Parson's wife and nearly all his money. Parsons kept his cult membership separate from his daily life, until the day he dropped a tub of serious shit in his garage, blowing it to hell and ending his life. Parsons' story is another extended biographical sketch expertly presented by Donohue. I envy his ability to retain and organize material.

There's so much I haven't mentioned—Alan Kaufman on sobriety; a transcript of a spoken word piece by Kathy Acker from June, 1979; the Niles Silent Film Museum in Fremont, where Chaplin's classic *The Tramp* was shot; the only town in America built entirely with Chinese capital, Locke, CA; the Church of St John Coltrane; Ron Turner of Last Gasp, a venerable publisher and distributor of various underground weirdness (SS: "There's a rumor that you once smoked a joint with Lee Harvey Oswald in Texas. Is that true? RT: That's not true. It was in Monterey."); Bay Area road trips, and hell of other stuff. I try and get every issue; the quality and quantity is there. Yes, there are points here and there worthy of calling out, and the frequently-used oral history interview format is limited by the vagaries of memory, but verall I feel *Specious* Species is a great value for the price.

—Jeff Mason



My Life, My Body
Marge Piercy
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If you're a fan of feminist speculative/science fiction writers such as Margaret Atwood, Octavia Butler, or Ursula K. Le Guin chances are you've heard of Marge Piercy. She jokingly (I sense a tad bitterly) refers to herself as a "midlist" writer who has never enjoyed the same success as her peers despite releasing a number of novels and books of poetry. *My Life, My Body* is her new collection of poetry and essays reflecting on what drives her to make art and the significance of her legacy as an artists and activist.

Piercy is at her best when talking about the role of artist in society and her own passion for writing. There's a beautiful essay about how systemic censorship can lead writers to mentally censor their work in its infant stages. And that stale, bland ("Vanilla Pudding" is Piercy's term) prose is getting in the way of the real stuff, because as she notes wryly, "The muse is rarely polite." Piercy isn't pulling any punches here either—in one essay she goes after bestselling ciswhitestraightboy writers who have "a sort of balloon quality...you know that they may never actually sit alone in a room agonizing and working as hard as it takes to do good work ever again," and we know exactly what she means.

Unfortunately, when she's not reflecting on literature, Piercy's writing starts to fall apart. Many of the essays have the feel of unedited rants or, even worse, dated lamentations about the good ol' days when you could get $70 rent and great weed, man. "My house was built for $25,000 by a bunch of stoned hippies," she brags multiple times in her plea for an off-the-grid movement. Piercy tries to tackle a bunch of issues she clearly cares about: gentrification, homelessness, voting, and war. But for every one of those I can think of someone else who does it better, and at the end of the day I'd much rather hear Sarah Schulman's reflections on gentrification or watch the film *Born in Flames* for an example of feminist utopia. If you're already a fan of hers I'd pick this up but if not, *Women on the Edge of Time* would be a much better introduction.

— Arielle Burgdorf

MOVIES

BRING ME THE HEAD OF GENE SISKEL

CAROLYN KEDDY

It is always annoying when a documentary has no music nor interviews with its subject. It happens too often. One would think I'd somewhat be used to it by now. **Ghost On The Highway: A Portrait Of Jeffrey Lee Pierce & Gun Club** has that problem. It also starts out with two ex-Gun Club members Terry Graham and Ward Dotson who still have a chip on their shoulders regarding their association with Jeffrey Lee Pierce. Graham and Dotson are being interviewed on LA radio station Indie 103 and immediately the discussion goes to wanting to hit Pierce. All this straightaway negativity only makes me get defensive. Without that connection to Pierce no one would be interviewing either of them. That's not a good way to start out a film.

As **Ghost On The Highway: A Portrait Of Jeffrey Lee Pierce & Gun Club** continues, more friends are incorporated and present a more complete story. Jeffrey Lee Pierce was a flamboyant Los Angeles teen who was president of the Blondie fan club. He collected records, read a lot of books and played music. He was talented, but he was also a pain in the ass.

Gun Club formed when Pierce teaches Kid Congo Powers (amusingly the president of the West Coast Ramones fan club) how to play guitar. They were joined by bassist Don Snowden and drummer Brad Dunning. After playing one show as the Cyclones with singer Pleasant Gehman, the Gun Club is born with Pierce on vocals. The line-up plays some raucous shows around LA before the rhythm section leaves and is replaced by the Bags' rhythm section. Then Powers was asked to join the Cramps.

The Gun Club's line up changes many more times during Pierce's life. **Ghost On The Highway: A Portrait Of Jeffrey Lee Pierce & Gun Club** follows the trajectory of the band throughout them all. The constant is Pierce who infuriates as well as impresses everyone with whom he comes in contact. Although many former bandmates and friends are interviewed I am surprised there is no interview footage with Pierce himself. Surely, he must have done some interviews while he was around. There is some footage of on-stage banter, but no songs.

The mystery of the Gun Club's music does add an element to **Ghost On The Highway: A Portrait Of Jeffrey Lee Pierce & Gun Club**. The story is interesting enough to inspire viewers to seek out the records. The documentary is streaming for free online. (gunclubdoc.com)

As a bit of contrast I also watched **Quiet Riot: Well Now You're Here, There's No Way Back**. I was interested in the juxtaposition with the Gun Club since both bands were from LA in the '80s. Although both bands started out playing clubs to small audiences, had singers with delusions of grandeur and made an impression on their respective scenes, the Quiet Riot story just doesn't have the intrigue of the Gun Club. There is drinking, drugging and debauchery on both sides, but Quiet Riot's biggest hit was a cover of a Slade song, "Cum On Feel the Noize." They just pale in comparison.

The funniest thing to me about **Quiet Riot: Well Now You're Here, There's No Way Back** was listening to musicians complain that in the late '70s no one liked metal. All the labels were signing punk and new wave bands. I have heard over and over how punk was a reaction to overblown '70s rock. Yet, '80s hair metal bands complaining about punk is a new viewpoint. I don't buy that labels weren't interested in metal. Van Halen were already on the scene. I had to hear that shit all the time when I was a kid.

Quiet Riot: Well Now You're Here, There's No Way Back is not a straightforward music documentary. It covers the basic history of the band. The rise and fall. However I was somewhat flabbergasted when thirty minutes into the film it is announced that singer Kevin Dubrow died. Especially when the counter on the screener showed an hour and fifteen minutes of film remaining. What was going on?

Dubrow died in 2007 after many incarnations, break-ups and make-ups of Quiet Riot. The documentary brushes on the band in the '90s and '00s when they are playing county fairs and nostalgia bills. Drummer Frankie Banali who was good friends with Dubrow stopped playing music after his death. Three years later Banali decides to reform the band. Then the whole thing flips. **Quiet Riot: Well Now You're Here, There's No Way Back** starts to tell the story of getting the band back together. It is painful and depressing to watch. At least Banali is up front about his reasons. He wants to pay tribute to his friend, but he needs the money.

The majority of **Quiet Riot: We'll Now You're Here, There's No Way Back** becomes the Frankie Banali story. It should be noted that the film was directed by Banali's fiancée Regina Russell. Banali and the other band members audition singers. Banali is disappointed that no one sounds exactly like Dubrow. When they finally settle on Mark Huff, who has a good voice, Banali is disgusted to discover he does not act like a rock star. Banali's attempt to recreate his life in the '80s begins to get really pathetic.

When Huff continually fucks up Quiet Riot's big hit I couldn't help but laugh. I am not against reunion bands per se, but stop taking it so seriously. If it isn't fun why do it? Of course, that trainwreck atmosphere kept me watching **Quiet Riot: We'll Now You're Here, There's No Way Back** until the end. (quietriotmovie.com)

Speaking of gratuitous things, there's **I Need A Dodge: Joe Strummer On The Run**. The basis of this documentary is an interview Joe Strummer did in 1997 on Spanish Radio. He was in Spain in 1985 and bought a Spanish-made Dodge car. When he suddenly had to leave in January of 1986 due to his daughter being born he left the car in a parking garage. Eleven years later he wants it back.

In 1985 Joe Strummer went to Spain to get away from the final break up of The Clash. He met the band 091 in Granada. They were going to record their debut album and Strummer went along to the studio to help them. The majority of **I Need A Dodge: Joe Strummer On The Run** is the members of 091 recalling meeting Strummer and what happened while he was in Spain. It somewhat interesting, yet superfluous. Someone is grasping at straws with this. Also at the end the director Nick Hall goes looking for Strummer's car, apparently in 2015.

The packaging for the **I Need A Dodge: Joe Strummer On The Run** DVD is pretty nice. Along with the DVD there is a cassette containing the interview from 1997. It is cute listening to Strummer try to speak Spanish. There is also a postcard, a million dollar bill with Strummer's face on it and an insert with more of the story of Strummer in Spain. Even so **I Need A Dodge: Joe Strummer On The Run** is for fans only. (cadizmusic.com)

I am always looking for films to review. If you made one, send a copy to Carolyn Keddy, Maximum Rocknroll, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146. If your film is playing in the San Francisco Bay Area let me know at carolyn@maximumrocknroll.com. I will go see it. carolynkeddy.com

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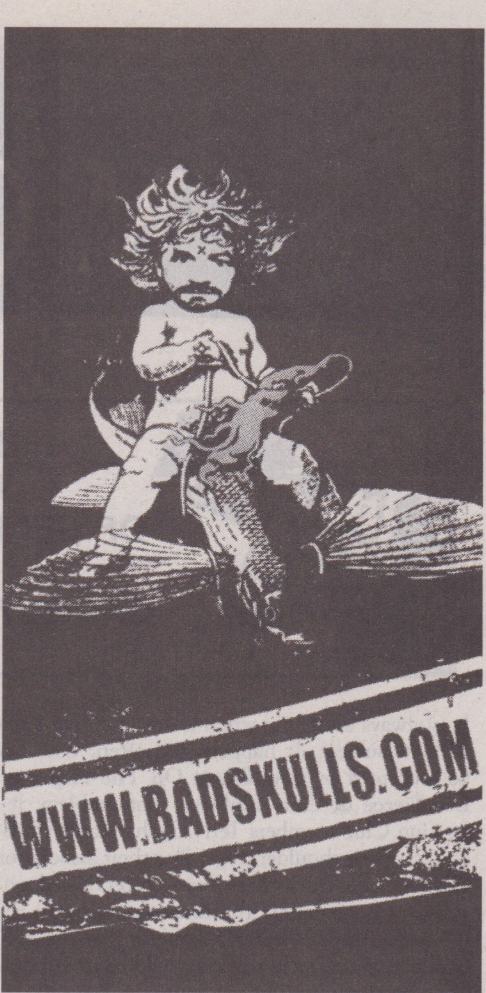
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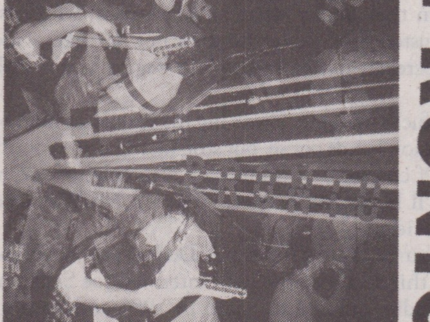
ALL OUT WAR OUT NOW

PRONTO



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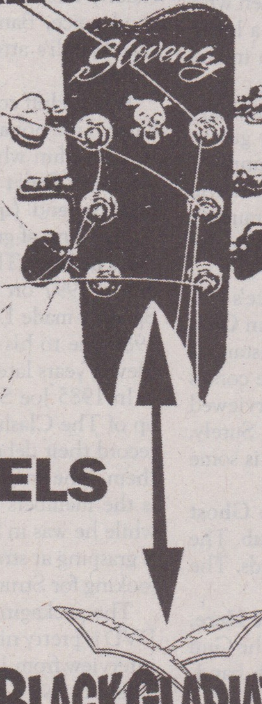
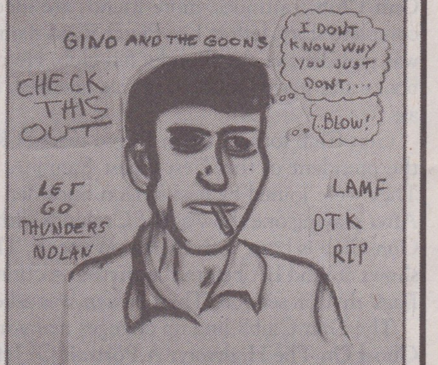


GINO and the GOONS


GINO AND THE GOONS
I DONT KNOW WHY YOU JUST DONT,... BLOW!
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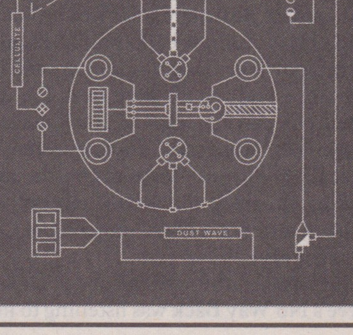
LET GO THUNDERS NOLAN
LAMF
OTK
RIP

7" feat. NOTS & BUCK BILOXI

CELLULITE


CELLULITE
DUST WAVE

Digital Deathcore feat.
SICK THOUGHTS DD OWEN

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RECORDS

Send **two** copies of vinyl or CD-only releases (if on both formats, please send the vinyl) to **Maximum Rocknroll, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146, USA.** We will review everything that falls within our area of coverage: punk, garage, hardcore, etc.—no major labels or labels exclusively distributed by major-affiliated distros. Releases without vocals or drums will not be considered. Please include postpaid price and contact information. Let us know where your band is from! *No reviews of test pressings or promo CDs without final artwork.*

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(CR) Camylle Reynolds
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(RK) Ramsey Kanaan
(RL) Ray Lujan
(RW) Ryan Wells
(RO) Rotten Ron Ready
(SZ) Shit Zoo
(WB) Will Blomquist
(WN) Robert Collins

A

AAS – 12"

Germany's AAS offers up thick and powerful hardcore driven by bursts of blast and throaty vocals. The aesthetic is sparse, the delivery is dark and metallic, and the quality level is extremely high. (WN)
(self-released)

ABSOLUT / PARANOID – "Jawbreaking Mangel Devastation" split LP

Damn, the ABSOLUT side of this alone would have been a top ten of the year EP. Paired with the monster PARANOID material, this is unbeatable! Both sides effortlessly fold metal influences into their raw punk attack, with ABSOLUT leaning a bit '80s thrash and PARANOID incorporating elements of early black metal. ABSOLUT just kill on this split, offering up four (I wish there were more!) tracks of heavy hardcore which betray a serious DEATH SIDE influence that goes for the throat from the first note and doesn't let up for a second. Catchy riffs, fantastic melodic solos and raw-throated vocals heavy with reverb lead the way, while the thick bass and straightforward D-beats keep the material well grounded in punk. ABSOLUT may not adopt the label, but metal punks everywhere could learn a thing or two from the riffing and soloing (on "Peace System" in particular), while the fist-pumping chorus of "Mental Problem" immediately creates a mental image of studded punx running wild. PARANOID's side is the more conceptually ambitious of the two; they work hard to create interesting MAYHEM-ish atmospheres before crashing into some straight-up Swedish mangel, with a touch of '00s hardcore influence in the frequent riff / tempo changes. Sweet Sugi art on a heavyweight gatefold only adds quality to a record that would still be one of the best of the year if it came in a plain black DJ sleeve. (AU)
(Beach Impediment / Brain Solvent Propaganda)

ACxDC – "Fiction Monger" 8" lathe

More grind/PV from these LA bros, featuring a completist-only lower-fidelity rerelease of their side of the TO THE POINT split EP. Sure it's heavy and it grinds sometimes, but this band just does nothing at all for me in any way. The instrumental intro is the only part worth revisiting, but it spends 132 ominous seconds building into what is essentially a run of the mill hardcore track with some blasts. On the upside, the one-sided screen-printed piece of surface-noise-ridden plexiglass has a lot of pictures of Jesus on it and it looks pretty cool. So there's that. (WN)
(To Live a Lie)

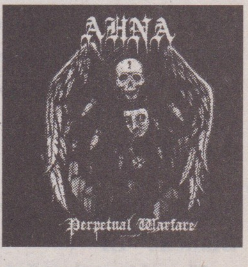
ADAPTIVE REACTION – "Carjack My Heart" EP

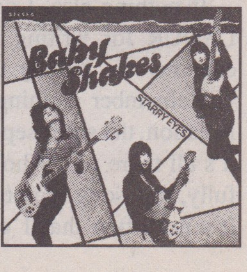
A bit late to the mag, this EP was released back in 2013 but hey, we're at war, *remember*? Priorities! The two songs on the A-side are totally solid punk rippers that actually have a chance to stick in your brain for more time than it takes to butter your pizza. The flip on the other hand is a useless cover of GARY GLITTER's "Do You Wanna Touch me?" done gravel-voice style. Shit. (RW)
(Jukebox)

AFAX – "11 11" EP

Dirty rock'n'roll hardcore from AFAX. Side "F" starts off with dirgy guitar and bass with booming percussion and interesting CRAMPS inspired vocals. For being so repetitive, it is very engaging, like the dense sounds of ELECTRIC WIZARD meeting the gothic desperation of CHRISTIAN DEATH, but hardcore. On side "U" (I think I get what they are saying here) AFAX continue to play a spy-TV show riff, like a hardcore Peter Gunn, with crackling guitar and street rock swagger. It's unique in that it progresses with metal aggression and next level distortion. This first track on side two is also very repetitive, which I like, but they could use a dose of speed for a few measures. In their defense, it's called "Trash Walk." The last song, "Ufux," just nails this coffin lid down,

ABSOLUT
PARANOID
Jawbreaking Mangel Devastation





with some RUDIMENTARY PENI post-*Cacophony* mania. Brief tracks with a nasty attack. (JR)
(Jeth Row)

AHNA – "Perpetual Warfare" LP

Gruesome metal bastards AHNA deliver an intense NAUSEA meets SACRILEGE meets AURA NOIR LP punctuated with the evil grunts, screams and gut-wrenching "ughs" of their vocalist and drummer, Anju. This is pure evil, six tracks of dooming and eerie pungent punk metal about oblivion, war, dying, pestilence, and the dismal, unnatural new world. The guitarist Graham sings on the second side, which is much more Death-beat metal than crust punk. Dividing vocal duties creates a "one-band split" feeling that does not get monotonous. The last track, from a previous demo recording, is the iciest, with wintery guitar solos that shine with a synthesizer effect. This is a kvlt record for those attending misery's masquerade. (JR)
(Choking Hazard / Neanderthal Stench)

ANEURYSM – "Veronica" EP

Didn't NIRVANA have a song called "Aneurysm"? Nevermind. (JK)
(Tor Johnson)

BABY SHAKES – "Starry Eyes" LP

Man, I feel like it's been ages since I've seen a new BABY SHAKES record. This one picks up right where the last one left off. Imagine an amazing combination of the GO-GO'S, the BUSY SIGNALS and SUZY Y LOS QUATTRO. It's pop, it's punk, it's power pop and it's rock'n'roll. Sure, it's all that, and more. If you like infectious power pop that is mid-tempo and perfectly delivered, then you're in for a treat. Dave? Dave's just the drummer in a band otherwise composed of attractive (and extremely) talented women. If Dave's name weren't on the back of the record sleeve, you'd never know he existed. (KK)
(Lil' Chewy)

BALLADUR – "Plage Noire, Plage Blanche" LP

If nothing else, I would celebrate BALLADUR for writing a song that dead-on captures the feeling of JOY DIVISION's "I Remember Nothing." The coldness, the isolation, the sheer sepulchral atmosphere—it's all there on "Who's to Blame." Thankfully, this song is not the only bright spot. It's not often that I come across a record that deserves the descriptor "cold wave," but *Plage Noire, Plage Blanche* absolutely does. It also rocks. Icy synths, the barest scrape of post-punk guitar, two enchanting vocalists, and a deft grasp of recording mixing in just enough lo-fi dirt all come together to make a thoroughly enjoyable record. The band liken themselves to SUICIDE, but I think that they hew closer to the aforementioned JOY DIVISION and some of the works of PHILIP GLASS from the '70s. Theirs is a different kind of roughness and oppression, more evident in the deep pummel of their drum machine or the way elements grind over each other, refusing to drop neatly into place. It's a cold, harsh, and sometimes brutal effect that enthralled me when paired with the ethereal aspects of the vocals and atmospheric synths. If you've got the smudgy eyeliner, BALLADUR has got the goods. (LP)
(Le Turc Mecanique)

BALLOT BURNER – "Forward Into Extinction" EP

This debut EP from Saskatchewan's BALLOT BURNER is harsh political D-beat hardcore with hints of grind and black metal and a uniquely clean and excellently produced sound. The chords are bleak and the pace is an engaging gallop with enraged precision. The vocals are powerful and screamed, but understandable, clear and undistorted. The track "Life Hack" really showcases BALLOT BURNER as an exceptional band, demonstrating surprising and inspired songwriting. Surprising in the sense that most first outings for a band are not this advanced. The high-contrast sleeve depicts skeletons, of course, but this troupe de morte from Les Diableries is strangely uncomfortable to look at. (JR)
(Harvest King)

BASTARDO FOUR – "Alt & Schnell" 10"

I'd be really quick to write this off except for two things: there's a beautiful old motorcycle on the cover (think it's a BSA?) and the singer has the craziest spitting, slobbering *Hogan's Heroes* German singing voice. Really. It's like being detained in a Nazi prisoner of rock'n'roll camp for 20 minutes. Musically, it's pretty standard fast-rocking punk like NEW BOMB TURKS but tuned really low, sludgy and mean. All these factors come to a head on the song "Goodoldog." It has to be heard to be believed. It will leave you feeling all icky and unclean. *Prost!* (RO)
(self-released)

BLACK ABBA – "Betting on Death/ Civilized"

Sick submerged sounding basement rattle with creepy keyboards, charred guitars, and to die for bratty female vocals that will collectively pummel out what remains of your mind! I have been looking forward to this 45 all year after enjoying the BLACK ABBA bandcamp relentlessly, and this two song blaster has re-arranged my hopes and dreams… Though I think their newest tape on Holotrash is my favorite release of theirs, this is a rager of a 45 and fans of feral punk should pay attention. Sounds like a band off an imagined *Blood Stains Across Louisiana* jumped a Bomp! group and created this wild stew. Thumbs up, death's got my money. (LG)
(Goner)

BLACK PANTIES – "The Future" EP

Can one deviant gimp set the world afire? Mr. PANTIES, whose onslaught began with a flexi a wee bit back, re-appears with two hard slabs this month. This 'un's the meatier of the two, I say. BLACK PANTIES are neg-vibing all the way to the bank, shitting out three great knuckle-dragger anthems and one meager skid-mark thrasher. No duds, though the title track and "Born Into Shit" thoroughly cream their counterparts. HENRY FIAT hating himself while on downers? Yes, visually and sonically. (MC)
(Windian)

BLACK PANTIES – "Prophet of Hate/ Violence"

Who doesn't love black panties? They feel all soft and silky, and black's flattering on almost anyone. This guy loves 'em so much he made them his *nom de plume*. Think he used to be a DUMPER (as in LUMPY'S boyyyyz). This record starts out fuzzed to eleven and tuned down down down. A madman spewing atop joyous noise not unlike KILSLUG or DRUNKS WITH GUNS, aptly titled "Prophet of Hate." "Violence" travels more into garage punk stomp but is even noisier than the first. A stellar effort to satisfy your deep dark desires. Suck it. (RO)
(Total Punk)

THE BRISTLES – "Last Days of Capitalism" LP

Swedish hardcore legends return! Blazing and muffled, this monstrous slab delivers escalating and seemingly psychotic D-beat punk. Slightly spoken word but mostly insane hardcore, this more anthemic sound reminds me of UNCURBED and AVS

KUM. There are plenty of samples to carry the message along. Maniacal laughter, mockery and passion persist throughout the record. My best friend told me the BRISTLES played as the backing band for FABIENNE DELSOUL. This is a fantastic example of their capabilities as a political punk band and force for solidarity in the DIY music scene. More albums need this grit and bold confidence regarding gender equality, socialism, and fascism. (JR)
(Civilisation / Heptown / Pike)

BULLETS OR BALLOONS – "Naturalistically" CD

Intricate punk with tons of tempo changes that unfortunately fails to deliver a tasty hook. I hate to say this, but I think they need to smoke more weed. This feels more like music teachers getting weird and mathy on the weekends, rather than real life jazz worshipping freakazoid insaniacs with fucked up time signature tattoos. Listening to this made me immediately blare my copy of *Wrong* by NO MEANS NO, so thanks for that. (DZ)
(Machine VII)

CAVE CURSE – "Stoned & Dethroned/Out of Time"

Punks and synths have had a fractious relationship from that start. Now, in 2015, people aren't so worked up about it, but the results are still a little hit or miss. Take, for example, CAVE CURSE, the bedroom synth project of Bobby Hussy of garage-popsters the HUSSY. Here Bobby presents two minimally produced tunes, with sparse mid-tempo drum machine beats, droning bass keys providing structure, and minimal melodic lines that follow the vocals. This kind of keyboard music frustrates me to no end while boring me to tears. Bobby's brought out something like a cleaned up, less catchy version of songs JAPANTHER were writing circa *Master of Pigeons*. Perhaps it's the feeling that I get that these were written on a guitar (or at least with the subliminal mentality that they would be played on a guitar), but neither track grabbed my attention. Moreover, I wouldn't say that this style of whatever wave is punk. It's not damaged, experimental, aggressive, angsty or exuberant. What you have is some very basic, very boring keyboard pop. (LP)
(Volar)

LE CHEMIN DE LA HONTE – LP

Nervous, desperate art punk from Paris, and yet another classic from Danger Records who seem to only put out records that merit purchasing instantly. Dark, desolate sounds with Lily's cool-but-tough chanteuse meets MALARIA!-style vocals. The music is really doomed and propulsive, has a mechanical feel, the endless post-industrial landscapes of post-punk, but its skittishness hits somewhere between the strange sounds of early NY art-punk like COME ON, and the doomed sounds of GREG SAGE with added synth damage. More than just another goth tribute act! Really cool and interesting group, true atmospheric art-punk with dark impulses that will also appeal to fans of the current gothwave trend that has consumed punk. No chorus pedal apparent! I really like this. It gets better the more you listen. (LG)
(Danger)

CHRON TURBINE / VIOLENT BULLSHIT– split EP

The guy who was once behind records such as *Dance Tonight! Revolution Tomorrow!* and songs with titles such as "I Am Nietzsche" now has "no time for liberation" and consequently shits out a by-the-numbers rock hardcore track, which gets my toe tapping but is ultimately disposable. I did like their earlier LP, though. CHRON TURBINE is also ex-screamo and delivers a far-better instrumental track that consists of a single shuffling riff with a subsequent sorta-mismatched sorta-not riff randomly thrown on top and then taken off, along with feedback to fill in extra gaps. Their side makes this record worth picking up. (DG)
(Peterwalkee)

CHUMP CHANGE / INFRA ED & JASON POTBELLY – split EP

This is a pretty damn weird record. I usually mean that as a compliment, but this time it's not one. INFRA ED does his best attempt at doom, complete with synth and a clap track, and JASON POTBELLY does a pretty amazingly bad operatic metal thing. Both had a less than memorable mid '80s sound. Flip it over and you get to hear CHUMP CHANGE fart out a brain-dead Fat attempt that made me want to hurl. (DZ)
(1332 / 40th Avenue Studios / Little Mafia / Pig)

CHUMPS – "Gimme Headache" LP

This is the second and supposedly final LP from Austin, TX's CHUMPS. The band started in the '90s and released their first LP in 2000. Have they been playing that whole time? Wow. Fifteen years between albums is a bit of a wait, but it is nice to see that they have managed to hang on to that '90s sound. Trashy rock and roll with a macho who-gives-a-fuck attitude. It's rough and haggard with just enough charm to make it fun. Plus I like that they have a song called "Unsmartest Baby." My new favorite word. (CK)
(Super Secret)

CICUTOXIN / PIGEON HUNT – split LP

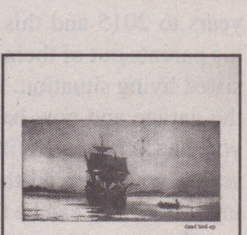
Man, I dig PIGEON HUNT. Total spazzed-out prog-core. It's like they take all those really sick fast parts of your favorite YES songs, and they only do that, *but* they do it way faster and way more pissed off. Disorienting noise permeates, adding a layer of psychedelic aggression. Fans of IRON LUNG, MAN IS THE BASTARD or other weirdo powerviolence bands will dig this. CICUTOXIN brings us some pretty run-of-the-mill doom. They keep it classic, taking much from CANDLEMASS and CATHEDRAL, and

BLACK
ABBA
A BETTING ON DEATH
B.CIVILIZED

BLACK PANTIES

THE BRISTLES · LAST DAYS OF CAPITALISM

CHARLES DE GOAL



while they definitely have their moments, some of the riffs are pretty tired. If you are a huge fan of pure doom metal you might want to check them out; everyone else get this one for the PIGEON HUNT side. (BA)
(Ramekuukkeli)

CUNTZ – "Force the Zone" LP

With four LPs worth of jagged art punk in half as many years, it's semi-shocking that CUNTZ haven't suffered any diminishing powers. There's still a dangerous oomph to their bile-burping that knocks you back on your heels, but the difference here is that I'm writhing rather than convulsing. It's gotta be the tunes: *Force the Zone* has better-crafted songs than their other collections. Plus the cover is purple, which is nice. (MC)
(Homeless)

DEAD BOD – "Like Wow" EP

What we have here is some raw ass garage punk from…somewhere. No one lets you know where their band is from anymore. I like that the packaging is straight-up boring. It's just a picture of a ship. You'd never know that the music contained within is packed with vitality, energy and hooks for days. The singer has a slight nasally drawl that reminds me of Rob Vasquez from early '90s garage punk bands like the NIGHT KINGS and the NIGHTS AND DAYS. If this came out in the '90s, it would be on Rip Off Records and would look cool and snotty. Great sounding, raw garage punk with a shitty attitude. Get it! (GH)
(Menial Fare)

DEAD MILKMEN / FLAG OF DEMOCRACY – split EP

Allegedly, this record was recorded and pressed in 1985. As the story goes, some kid in Philadelphia got the tracks from both bands and used his parent's credit card to finance the whole thing (without telling them). He was at school when the records were delivered to his house, but his parents were home and signed for the records, hid them in the garage and told the kid they had sent the records back. Fast forward thirty years to 2015 and this same kid is moving his parents out of their home and into an assisted living situation. He finds the record in the garage and now he's selling them to all you lucky people. With one quick internet search you can read the full story if you're interested. You can be the judge of its veracity. The record is actually pretty good and all of the songs are previously unreleased. Hoax or not, it's certainly worth picking up if you're a fan of either band. (FS)
(SRA)

CHARLES DE GOAL – "ZigZag/ Damaged Goods"

Some new recordings from legendary French '80s cold waver. It has a bit of a more modern sound than his '80s stuff, but still has an aggressiveness that most newer bands aping this style don't. "ZigZag" is so catchy and angry. I love it. "Damaged Goods" is a GANG OF FOUR cover that lets the keyboard take the lead. It has as much bite as the original, but an odder sound that makes it stand apart. Great stuff. (CK)
(Danger)

DIÄT – "Positive Energy" LP

This half-Australian half-German Berlin-based quartet has had an interesting run. After a couple tapes and two EPs, which harbored intrigue, finally comes the much-anticipated full-length. Yes, it was worth the wait. If with their previous work DIÄT were setting up the basic structure of their aesthetic and sound, with *Positive Energy* they are refining the interior, with painstaking attention to sonic and visual detail. Like the subtle purple hue that colors both the album cover and booklet, there's a consistently glum tone of refined, modern day demise dripping from the notes like wet paint. Opener "Young and Successful" is the rug that ties the whole room together, a post-modern post-punk masterpiece. Taut percussions build up and pause for silence, complementing the vocals so despondently articulated. "Painting houses, painting pictures, get the job done / write a manifesto, write a shopping list." Bleak revelations from the dairy aisle. The guitars work eloquently together, like a well-rehearsed choreography, the dynamic bass lines rumbling underneath everything like trains on a track. The mundane emptiness expressed in "Toonie" (an elegy to Sydney's "seemingly endless grey suburban void") is escaped with a chorus of dreamy hooks and dizzy riffs. "Nausea" follows and the intricate guitar meanderings and hypnotic rhythm section turn drowning "in unforgiving daylight" sound like slow death underwater. Sublime. "Nightmare" sets off like a burning house, with fiery riffs and ominous vocals, a scorching guitar solo leading up to the final breakdown, and, like chiaroscuro, their CANNANES' cover works to highlight their collective evolution into a tightly interconnected entity. The steady, vivid tempo on "Schadenfreude" captures a brilliantly unnerving sense of persecution, the intensity and intent of the bass and drums and the malice in the riff and vocals making for a haunting experience. The orchestration on "Hurricane" takes the listener on a rampant ride, every element building and retaining the tension, eventually coming to a cinematically abrupt end. Closer "Sinkhole" recounts "ways to expire" with memorable charm and unapologetic realism, ultimately seizing the simultaneous profundity and futility of existence and the relativity of reality. It's in this reality's thinly cast shadow that DIÄT balance forces and align energies to create something truly powerful and positive. (LA)
(Iron Lung)

DIDISDEAD / NO BUSINESS – split EP

Debut for two! And both bands from Oakland, no less. 'Twould appear that while I'm sleeping in a decadent comfort each night, folks like DIDISDEAD and NO BUSINESS are engaging in all manner of degenerate punk tomfoolery. Bless 'em, as they complement each other perfectly here. A light, low-calorie nod to UK82 shite is detectable in each band, but the snot crust is flakier after blaring the NO BUSINESS side. I don't wish swift death upon DIDISDEAD either, though I was looking at my watch (and I don't even own a watch) during their side. Does that translate to victory? (MC)
(Dumpster Fire, no info)

DIRTY FEW / ROOTBEER AND MERMENTAU – split EP

DIRTY FEW deliver two solid numbers firmly rooted in garage punk/rock. Mid-tempo and catchy, they've also got some snarly vocals. ROOTBEER AND MERMENTAU continue in the same garage-y vein, though they become almost swampy and a bit more deliberate. (KK)
(Snappy Little Numbers)

DISTÜRBIA CLADIS – "Disforia" EP

Damn! This one is so sick! These fuckers just rip through some extra fucking raw D-beat crust. No frills at all, just totally genuine hardcore crushers similar to ANTI CIMEX or early DISCHARGE. Featuring male and female vocalists who are both harsh and badass as fuck. If you like raging and furious music you will love this one. I couldn't recommend it more. (BA)
(Bucho / Veneno Sonoro / Crust or Die / Left Hand / Subverta / De Bike No Velo)

D.O.A. – "Hard Rain Falling" LP

This is a Kickstarter-funded record released by a 2015 D.O.A. with a RANCID-esque pseudo-reggae song on it. If that doesn't tell you that this record doesn't need to exist and that you don't need to own it, I suppose I'll continue. There is a uniquely Alternative Tentacles-affiliated early '80s hardcore sound here that, while energetic and tight, is far too cheeseball to not come off as an Epitaph-ready musical cartoon. Keithley's dramatic, water-in-throat vocals and sloganeering choruses are especially cringe-inducing, and better suited for voice acting some cartoon villain than a punk record. I'm certainly glad my name isn't in the liner notes as a donor. (DG)
(Sudden Death)

DRONEZ – "Corporate Funded Terror" EP

These no-nonsense Philly punx drop four tracks of solid D-beat hardcore that's well worth your attention. The ultra-intense vocals grab your attention first, but the songwriting is definitely there as well. There's a Swedish influence at work—these songs are more reminiscent of the early DISFEAR material than DISCHARGE—but in the world of third wave D-beat that's not a bad pool of bands to call on at all. "Killed by Police" is the banger here, with the anger and outrage palpable through both the lyrics and delivery. A nice silkscreened sleeve and atypical art for this kind of release only elevate the whole package. Good stuff! (AU)
(Ryvolte)

E.A.T.E.R. – "Projectiles For The People" CD

It's not really fair to compare this release to their classic output…but then again, why the fukk not? So I did that, I blasted this and then I blasted *Doomsday Troops*…and this new collection of E.A.T.E.R. bangers bangs hard. More D-beat and a little more in control, though not mellower in any way. Maybe there's not a classic like "Violence" here but "Statement" is exactly that, affirmation that these Swedes are still up for the task. Thin production puts you on edge and there's a subtly more metallic approach than you might expect (like the guitars in "Weapons," which are doing something that I can't quite put my finger on but that I really like). I suppose my only complaint is that this thing isn't on wax. Kids these days... (WN)
(self-released)

ENDLESS GRINNING SKULLS – "Endless Grinning Spirits" EP

Blasting right out of the gate, the A-side here is a full throttle hardcore burner with a killer double bass drum MOTÖRHEAD-style breakdown. The flip is a (only slightly) more restrained version of the same, no frills anywhere near either side of this record, and also no attempt to be cool or with the times in any way. These blokes just want to play fast and furious hardcore punk, a style of music I happen to enjoy quite a lot. (WN)
(Viral Age)

EPIC PROBLEM / HOLIDAY – split EP

These English bands would fit great on a show together. Both have up-tempo songs, sing-along choruses, and a melancholy, anthemic vibe—the sound of celebrating despair. Or despair celebrating? HOLIDAY uses a few vocalists, trading off between the full-throated rough-voiced guy and the guy who actually sings, though in a narrow range. They love the big woah-oh-ohs behind the chorus. The lyrics, about loss and hopeless alienation, are depressing. EPIC PROBLEM is similar, though catchier and tighter, with only one burly singer. They remind me of DILLINGER 4, especially on the breakdowns. They're the more accomplished of the two, and should go over big with the *Razorcake* crowd. HOLIDAY's all right, but I'll be playing EPIC PROBLEM more. (JM)
(Brassneck / Just Say No to Government Music / Prejudice Me / Pumpkin)

EVERYDAY THINGS – "All Day//All Night" EP

Here's some strummy and very catchy Canadian power pop with some nice guitar parts and organ. "Pretender" is a "shoulda been a hit" from 1979 transported into our present. Some really nice riffs that are also on the border of early punk but still mostly power pop on this one. Vocally, it reminds me if the MARKED MEN/RADIOACTIVITY went down a rabbit hole of 20/20, MILK & COOKIES and early NICK LOWE. (JD)
(No Front Teeth)

EX FRIENDS / FLAG OF DEMOCRACY – split EP

There aren't many bands around that have been going for over 30 years. Even fewer that can still put out a decent release in 2015. Long-running Pennsylvania melodic hardcore legends FLAG OF DEMOCRACY kick off this EP with three short, very fast, snotty pop-punk songs that sound like they could have been recorded by a much younger band. Where do they get the energy? EX FRIENDS are similarly poppy but with a slower, more indie rock sound. (AM)
(SRA)

EXHAUSTION – "Phased Out" EP

Punk and punk-adjacent bands putting out a 12" EP with dance remixes on the B-side always psych me out. I'm down to bridge styles, but who's really at the club turning up to two and a half hours worth of Mikey Young remixes? Do they play NITZER EBB there? Is that what people do when they're done reviewing for *Maximum*? That said, the two tracks on the A-side form a compelling single in their own right. EXHAUSTION's first two LPs were incredibly crafted, soundtracks to a night drive of severe anxiety backed with steady drumming, guitars peeling stucco off distant houses, woozy bass lines, modern rock negativity for graveyard shift couriers and call center workers. Those were slow-burners; appropriately enough, the songs here are a little more circuitous and self-con-

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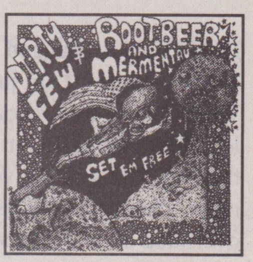

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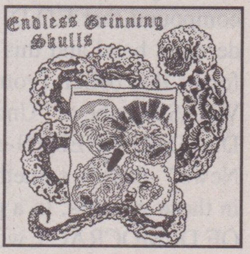

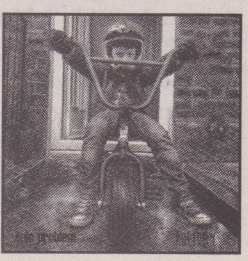

tained. Drums on the title track of this EP start off sounding like a sped-up KILLING JOKE pattern or a helicopter hovering closer and closer to the ground. The next track, "Colleague" also feels like it slows down and speeds up in tempo, a deranged mind game only this bunch of twisted Australians would pull. Not appropriate for chillout rooms anywhere. (EW)
(12XU)

FACTION – "Pegged For Live 1985" LP

Wow! Sorry, I am just surprised. A FACTION LP (a live recording from 1985, no less!) is fucking killer. Can't say I've spun the FACTION in ten years, mainly because most skate rock is essentially just super overrated derivative scenester shite. But this thing really manages to turn it out. Kinda reminds me of early TSOL and the '80s beaches style, almost goth. It is 1985, so the guitar solos get kinda metal and annoying, but the scrappy live recording quality makes you feel like you're watching the greatest VHS hardcore show ever recorded instead of some noodle-y studio schlock. That said, I can't deal with two sides of this at once—I'll save the second half for later! White wax! (GB)
(Not Like You)

FLAG OF DEMOCRACY / MERDA – split EP

Philly's longest-running punk band (maybe longest-running band period!) blitzed *MRR* this month with a ton of releases. Haven't heard the rest of them, but the four tracks on this split are great! Equal parts snotty poppy punk and stop-start hardcore, all executed with style and precision. It's long been a truism around the *MRR* compound that F.O.D. are a criminally underrated band and this new stuff only reinforces that belief. From the SCREECHING WEASEL vibe of "Under My Dumb" to the DEAD KENNEDYS-esque "Turn Off The News," there's something for every punk in these grooves. In a perfect world, FLAG OF DEMOCRACY would be up there with SEX PISTOLS and MINOR THREAT as a punk rock starter band. Brazil's MERDA do an admirable job of keeping up on the flip, offering up five quick and quirky tunes that mesh well with F.O.D.'s eclectic style. Side-opener "Giga Pudding" might be too goofy for its own good, but the rest of the side is funny, scrappy pop punk that's quite enjoyable. The raw recording provides a bit of bite that livens up the songs considerably. Pick this up for the F.O.D. material, stick around for the MERDA stuff. (AU)
(Laja / SRA)

FLESH RAG – LP

A Candian band tapping into that '90s garage punk sound. The music is straight ahead. The vocals are a bit flat with a monotonous sing-songy style. They do a nice cover of the OBLIVIANS' "You Fucked Me Up, You Put Me Down." Plus the record is on pretty one-sided red vinyl with a black swirl. (CK)
(Surfin' Ki)

FLEXX BRONCO – "Volume 3" LP

I feel like I've seen this band's name 15,0000 times on *The List*. (Remember that? It's still exists but I guess you've been too busy getting invites to shows from Facebarf.) This Bay Area band's been around awhile and this is my first time hearing them. It's a mix of TURBONEGRO and a shitload more of 1997-2000's Scandi-rawk bands along with bits of FU MANCHU (without the heavy wah-pedal) and the like. Loads of wailing and a few MISFITS-y "whoa oh" parts on "Nightmare." There are some duds, like the plodding "Deadman" and the shitty '50s style ballad. Other times they remind me of ZEKE or late-'90s DWARVES. File under "pretty OK but also at times forgettable." (JD)
(Self-Destructo)

FLQ – "More of You" EP

This band has a killer abrasive early '80s style hardcore sound with a nice raw, buzzsaw guitar tone and snotty, barked vocals to match that have a detached and lethargic feeling. The actual songs are hit or miss, with a couple being mid-paced, one being more creepy crawly, and the final one having a pogo tempo, but the riffs are meh, and the downer energy doesn't work in its favor. Like a not-as-good version of the SCHOOL JERKS (with whom they share members). File under: good, almost great. (DG)
(Bad Vibrations)

FRANTIC STUFFS – "Last Wave" LP

Not that my reviews are so regularly read, but I've been known to say that anything with a grim reaper on the cover wins points with me. Well, I should have included a disclaimer that a reaper combined with creepy jester people in horrible puke-inducing pastel pinks and greens might make me think twice. Truly one of the worst (or best) covers I've seen and a much more interesting record than my gag reflex expresses. This is prime Japanese hard rock. It's got the punker elements of the REGISTRATORS and DICTATORS with a love of fist-in-the-air Japanese greats like BOW WOW and maybe a little SCORPIONS. Sure, there are some predictable riffs and vocal harmonies that are pretty puss, but songs like "I'm So Nervous" and "Mr. Zero" are bloody-handed wah wah wanking brilliance. How could I doubt? The reaper delivers again. (RO)
(Episode Sounds)

FRAU – "Mira" EP

This is way harsh but not blown-out, which is not an easy feat. The guitar stays at a thin metallic scrape and feedback pops up in rhythmic places but the bass and drums keep it almost normal. The vocals come out as thin screeches and the entire thing feels like a decayed building falling down. It keeps moving in shambles, limping along and so full of rage. Noised out punk that doesn't take any easy routes (distortion and delay, I'm looking at you) to arrive there. Also includes members from some extreme killer things (WOOLF, GOOD THROB). Their demo ruled and they just keep getting better. (MM)
(self-released)

FUTURE HATE – CD

Undeniable take on X, roided all to hell with metal. And as much as I would be into that idea, FUTURE HATE just doesn't deliver. Atonal EXENE-style vocals lack bite, and the constant heavy chug of the guitar and relentless metal drums seem out of place. This straight-up borders on modern day METALLICA. (CR)
(self-released)

GERIATRIC UNIT – "S.O.T.O" EP

Old, fast and loud, they claim. You could add bald as well. Nottingham, England's GERIATRIC UNIT plays (mostly) straight-ahead raging hardcore. The sound here is hampered by the thick layer of bass over the recording. I didn't think the songs were really outstanding, until the last one. "Pimple" deviates from the formula with a slower, bass-led buildup to the best thrash on the record, with super-tight riffing. If you'll get a record for one great song, this is a safe pick-up. The lyrics dwell on the singer's struggles with "Aspergic qualities," which lead to severe social isolation. He takes his frustrations out on "Neurotypical Bastards"

(a song title) and shit-talkers in the scene. The lyrics are translated into Japanese. Excepting the last track, this is passable but not crucial. (JM)
(Crew For Life / Viral Age)

THE GIFT – "Golden Gate" EP

Three songs of poppy punk in the vein of the BUZZCOCKS. It almost sounds like they are trying to channel the JAM but the songs are too simple, the guitar parts are too predictable, the drums are too straightforward and it lacks the hooks. After a couple listens to the A-side, I was ready to write it off. Luckily, the B-side saves the record. The song isn't drastically different from the two on the other side but it's a little more pop, a little more musically interesting. It has hooks, it has a catchy bass line, and there is more going on with the vocals. What I'm getting at is that it sounds like more of a complete song. It's worth giving it a listen. (PA)
(Golden Gate)

GROWWING PAINS – "I Always Know" EP

Is this the band from Sweden, Detroit, Montreal, or Philly? Who the fuck knows, because there's absolutely zero information on this record besides song titles. This is pretty good, sugar-laced dude pop. I didn't catch this the first time around, but after a few listens, I'm hearing a tip of the hat, if not a super basic one, to CAMPER VAN BEETHOVEN. I'd watch the fuck out of these guys, or listen to another record of theirs anytime. This isn't punk or anything, but it's pretty great. (DZ)
(Volar)

GRUMP – "Flatline" EP

Imagine MECHT MENSCH getting into acid and doing a metal-tinged but mostly out-there five song 12" in 1985. This cool sounding record is musically all over the place, but is quite interesting, if not easily digested. The recording and vocals have a scuzzy, boomy, mid '80s sound almost reminiscent of lower-fi crossover or proto-crust, along with a bass that's pretty high in the mix. The guitar tone is thick, mangled, and vaguely psychedelic in a VOID or even CHEETAH CHROME MOTHERFUCKERS circa-*Into The Void* sort of way, with additional well-wielded guitar squeal. The songs often change shape, but through it all you get some straight-ahead hardcore, headbanging sludge, hazy pogo moments, and even some "Children of the Grave" type swing. Can you handle it? (DG)
(Various)

HARMONICA LEWINSKY – "Naked Brunch" EP

Four tracks of organ-driven garage rock. The first track is a surfy instrumental that reminds me of SHADOWY MEN ON A SHADOWY PLANET. The rest of the songs have a real "Y B Normal?" fedora vibe. Also the name is terrible, but on the positive side, there's no actual harmonica. (AM)
(Reel Time)

HEAVEN'S GATE – "Woman at Night" 12"

I hear a lot of different styles that congeal nicely into one big heap on this LP. The first song reminds me of the post-punk flair of KLEENEX / LILIPUT until the chorus kicks in. There are also elements of dirge-y shoegaze, upbeat punk, noise rock and death rock. Singer Jess Paps veers from a sometimes-monotone drawl into a desperate, caterwauling wail that conveys the bleakness of some of the lyrics. Speaking of bleak, "Amanda Berry" is about the woman of the same name who escaped from her assaulter/captor in 2013 after ten years of imprisoned abuse in Cleveland, Ohio. This makes the album sound like it's a downer, but it's not. It finds the little bit of light in the darkness and struggles to hold on before everything fades away. (GH)
(Dull Tools)

HERIDA PROFUNDA – CD

A haunting ambient intro track gives way to a very 2010s amalgam of groovy metallic hardcore, grind and crust on this 2013 release from HERIDA PROFUNDA, a band based in Poland with one member who lives in the UK. Some of this, especially the bass, almost sounds like a mash-up of various '90s radio hard rock styles, and there's a lightly math-y feel to some of the riffs, but unfortunately very little of it manages to stick in a meaningful way. Vocals alternate between a classic death metal bellow and manic weirdo shrieking, while the lyrics cover a familiar but inexhaustible stock of topics like anti-racism, anti-fascism, animal rights, and, yes, pride in one's crew. This is a solid enough record for its style, but there's not much here to set this apart from ten thousand other bands doing a more or less interchangeable shtick. (WB)
(783 Landsberg Hardcore Crew)

HOLIDAY – "Missiles on the Roof" EP

English pop punk with thoughtful commentary on politics and society. This is the nicer side of pop punk, rather than the annoying or "crusty" kinds. I'm the kind of person that finds it hard to differentiate between chord progressions from song to song with this style, but when forced to listen I can find plenty of good melodic hooks in these songs. I definitely identify with the line in "Sunshine": "That sickening feeling I get ten times a day when I look at people doing normal things..." Probably wouldn't add this EP into my rotation, but it's solid stuff. (MA)
(Antikörper / Lost Cat / Pumpkin / Just Say No to Government / Brassneck)

HOUND – "Out of Space" LP

Super huge sounding heavy/doomy rock (but not quite metal) that's somewhere between SEAWEED, MUDHONEY (both in the vocals), FU MANCHU (I know, I know it's the *second time* I referred to them in

Everyday Things

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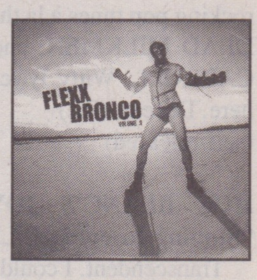
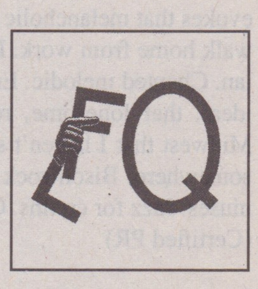
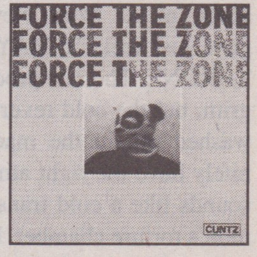






BALLOT BURNER
FORWARD INTO EXTINCTION

this month's reviews) and KARP. This Philly trio makes some great riffs that are resonant as hell. There's also a not-super obvious ode to BLACK SABBATH in "Walkin' the Fine Line" which goes right into the also SABBATH-y doom/psych of "Intro" (which is track four, oddly enough). The rest of the LP continues to be pretty solid—even when it seems like it's gonna lose my interest, they pull off some great guitar tone and basslines and more gargantuan riffs. Don't forget the ace photo of the guitarist/singer Perry Shall looking like Cliff Burton sporting a Stiff Records shirt. (JD)
(SRA)

BONES HOWELL – "Big Heart In a Small World/Maya Angelou" CD

This is a two-song CD single from a New York dude with a backing band. A couple rocking pop tunes à la the LEMONHEADS, DEAD MILKMEN, and even a little JIM CARROLL. Witty lyrics add to the charm here. Decent. (RL)
(self-released)

HUE BLANC'S JOYLESS ONES – "Stoning Josephine" LP

Transcendent. I could listen to this on the moon. HUE BLANC'S JOYLESS ONES evokes that melancholic fury you feel on the walk home from work. Intellectual proletarian. Chanted melodic. Embody the Midwest ideal, that lonesome, romantic windswept Midwest that I haven't seen but might exist somewhere. Bison rock. Sad music for geniuses. Jazz for cretins. Greatest band. (BB)
(Certified PR)

HUMAN BODIES – "MMXII-MMXIV" CD

This one is some very scary Norwegian black metal from New England. These guys just reek of MAYHEM and DARKTHRONE. The raw production keeps it real grim, but the cold reverbed vocals get a bit washed out in the maelstrom. They definitely have the right atmosphere, though. It sounds like a cold transmission from a demon's torture chamber. I'm into it. (BA)
(Caligari)

HUMAN RACE – "I Can't Wait/Human Race"

WEIRDOS meets *Beach Boulevard*-style punky from Rome, very catchy and relentless and classic sounding, but I think if I wanted to listen to a modern take on this era I would just grab the first CLOROX GIRLS 12", as this somehow seems sort of generic/dad rock revival style. Something is missing; it's catchy but after the record stops the songs are gone instantly. I can imagine fans of the STITCHES digging this and I advise you to check it out if at all intrigued. (LG)
(Teenadelic)

THE HUSSY – "Appleseeds" EP

So, it looks like this is divided up into side "Heather" and side "Bobby". Side H = Side Heather. Side B = Side Bobby. Let's start with Side Heather. This one's got two tracks. Both are catchy and straightforward and feature vocals which are pretty without being sickeningly sweet. Side B is equally as catchy and a little less straightforward and a little more bouncy. The HUSSY never cease to amaze me in that they are constantly evolving and tweaking their sound, if only just a little bit. This is really an outstanding 45. (KK)
(Volar)

INSTIGATORS – "Phoenix" CD

The INSTIGATORS were one of the classic mid/late '80s UK punk bands. Coming out of the anarcho/underground/DIY scene, they, like many of their contemporaries, were greatly influenced by what was emanating from the other side of the pond, particularly records like GOVERNMENT ISSUE's *You*, the first DAG NASTY effort, and the first couple of SCREAM long-players. This melodic hardcore sound (of sorts) was grafted onto the more typical Brit stylings of a UK SUBS or RUTS, and well, this is what you got. *Phoenix* is their second LP, the first with an almost new lineup (minus the original guitarist), and it's a change in musical direction leaning more to the aforementioned Yank side of things. I never was a fan of the XPOZEZ, who provided the always-energetic new frontman for the INSTIGATORS, nor Tez's vocal stylings. And mentioning that I never thought that they bettered the genius of their original debut demo tape probably just makes me sound like an obscurest ponce. But aficionados of the likes of HDQ will dig this. The CD includes the original album plus a live in Germany set from 1987. (RK)
(Boss Tuneage)

INVISIBLE TEARDROPS / YOUR PEST BAND – split EP

If you live underneath a rock, you've probably *still* seen and heard one of Jamie Barrier's seventeen million other bands, most notably PINE HILL HAINTS and the WEDNESDAYS. I should go ahead and admit that technically I'm biased, as Jamie is a friend of mine, but this is pretty fucking good—1950s doo-wop inspired, sparse, dreamy rock with a sweet ass farfisa organ. This sounds really raw and fun, and Jamie's signature vocals kill it as always. I remember the last LP I reviewed by Tokyo's YOUR PEST BAND, and I was kinda shocked at how good it was, considering I thought their prior output was, uh, not so memorable. Usually when a band discards their wilder styles and starts up in a more mellow vein, it's a sure sign that I'd like them to jump off of a cliff, but these guys have really crafted some perfectly dreamy, hook laden rock here. Totally fucking smooth. Play this shit all day long (DZ)
(Snuffy Smiles)

KEEPERS – "Blasé" EP

KEEPERS are a relatively new band from San Diego. Their calling card is this three-song debut EP. Very bass-heavy, swinging garage rock with slack-jawed, detached vocals. "Blasé" is a good word for it. Reminds me a little of the PEE CHEES. (AM)
(Volar)

THE KNEW – "Scmew" LP

Can a band send me a record with a bio sheet that states shitty influences and tells me who to compare them to, and pull it off successfully? Shockingly, the answer appears to be yes. Even after all these terrible, cringe inducing ideas, I have to admit that this album *does* sound like it was written by lovers of rock operas, QUEEN, THIN LIZZY, and dozens of other intricate, solo heavy rock. I don't think I'd sing their praises just yet, but it's pretty good. The vocals oddly remind me of the *not* Pat Smear dude in DEATH FOLK. Weird enough to be reviewed in these here pages, but it's still kinda just rock. (DZ)
(Greater Than)

LAST SONS OF KRYPTON / REV. NORB AND THE ONIONS – split LP

Travel back to the '90s and the onslaught of goofy garage punk with former shitworker Reverend Norb leading the charge. LAST SONS OF KRYPTON do a competent job of ANGRY SAMOANS-style punk with a couple of covers for the kids. The ONIONS are one of the tighter and punker Rev. Norb combos and remind me of the WEIRDOS on a couple songs. Always a hoot live—and "hoot" seems like an apropos term for the good Reverend in general. The producer

dedicates this album to his newfound sobriety. Good for you brother. Carry on. (RO)
(self-released)

LAWSUIT MODELS – "Dudeman" EP

The A-side is straight pop punk that is very close to being radio rock. It sounds like they are trying to get one of those major label contracts in 1996. It's pretty close to the GASLIGHT ANTHEM (maybe a little less of The Boss though). The B-side is also an up-tempo pop-punk tune but a little more rough and aggressive with vocals that are slightly gruff, slightly snotty. It's a bit overdone with the guitar octaves and the part where they yell, "Go!" right before the cheesy guitar lead. It's not bad but then again, not memorable. (PA)
(Snappy Little Numbers)

JACQUES LE COQUE – "Tip of My Tongue/You Better Move"

Wow. I apologize if NOBUNNY is a nasty word, but this immediately made me think of that band. It's poppy and punk and just as catchy as can be. It's also got a big giant dash of jangly pop—think DREAM SYNDICATE. Seriously, the lead guitar in the A-side track is going to be in my head all day. I guarantee it. Excellent record. I begin my search for a copy of this one as soon as I'm done with this review. (KK)
(Windian)

LENTIC WATERS – "The Path" LP

A massive take on modern Euro-style screamo/hardcore, LENTIC WATERS achieve a nice balance of heaviness and tenderness across their newest LP, integrating a wide range of moods and tones into a seamless whole. This band certainly knows how to do pretty, and their slower and foggier post-rock and post-metal tendencies will probably make or break this for most punks. Those lilting builds and swirling guitar leads can be misleading, though, eventually giving way to the pure grinding darkness of songs like "The Hour." Can't say I followed them through the uplifting EXPLOSIONS IN THE SKY-goes-emo theatrics of "Between the Spheres," but hey, you guys do you. When they choose to drop the hammer, LENTIC WATERS have much of the same power as like-minded contemporaries such as THROWERS and TEMPEST, and the closing song "Abyss" in particular stands out as a incredibly mature realization of their elegant, sprawling vision. (WB)
(IFB / Maniyax / React With Protest / Zegema Beach)

LONGINGS – LP

From members of AMPERE, SIAMESE TWINS, RELICS, VACCINE, and many other great bands that sound nothing like this band or each other comes a powerful entry in the ever-robust field of US post-punk. LONGINGS play punchy, guitar-driven bleak punk with a killer sense of melody and a nice dual vocal exchange, and every song on here is a fucking banger. UK goth and its related substyles have been all the rage in recent years—no complaints here!—but LONGINGS follows bands like CRIMINAL CODE in exploring a different side of '80s revivalism, hanging out in the same shadows that once gave us the misery-pop genius of the WIPERS. Will Killingsworth of Dead Air Studio fame handles guitar and vocal duties and also recorded this, and as usual the tone and atmosphere is completely spot-on, the platonic ideal of what a punk record should (still) sound like in 2015. Western Mass ruling once again, damn. (WB)
(Framework)

MANIAC – "Chola Queen/Calamine"

Ace outing from this CUTE LEPERS and CLOROX GIRLS related lot. "Chola Queen" is big-beat glam punk that sounds like a gazillion bucks, though falls just outside Hitsville's city limits. "Calamine" is much more my speed: choppy punk with a borderline new wave catchiness (perhaps the copious oh-oh-oh's contribute here). (MC)
(No Front Teeth)

LOS MIERDA – "Punk Basurilla" EP

Rough (and probably drunk) punk sung in Spanish, but judging by the flyers in the layout, it looks like they're located somewhere in Germany. Nothing really stands out to me here musically; pretty standard fare. Without the snotty vocalist I'd be ready to just write it off, but he adds the edge that an otherwise generic sound needs in order to come off as energetic. If classic Spanish punk like ESKORBUTO and SINIESTRO TOTAL is your main jam, you'll probably find something worthwhile in this. (MA)
(Basurilla)

MIDNIGHT RERUNS – "Force of Nurture" LP

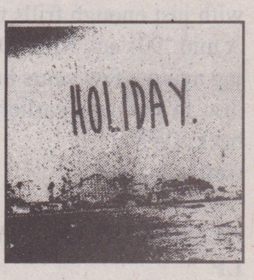
It would be a leap to call this a punk record. In fact it probably shouldn't be reviewed in this magazine. Not because it's bad or anything, but it just bears an undeniable resemblance to the majority of stuff you'd expect to hear on a '90s alternative rock radio station. There's a lot of love for the '90s these days, so maybe this might still be your thing. Do you like the TOADIES? …CAKE? …EVERCLEAR? If you said yes to all three, you will genuinely enjoy this album. Who knows, this could be the SEMISONIC of our generation! (FS)
(Dusty Medical)

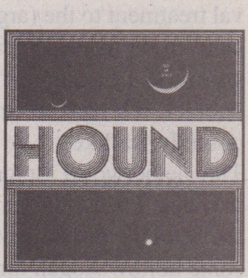
MOLEDEBATER – "The Only Punx in Town" LP

If you were to pass up this band from Brandon, Manitoba, because they have a name that makes no sense (to me) and cover art featuring a badly drawn dinosaur holding a bottle of glue, well….you'd be fucking up. MOLEDEBATER pack in 26 short songs about wage drudgery, the desperation of small town life, getting hit by cars while riding your fucking bike, the end of the world, freezing your ass off in the snow and much, much more. The sound is riding the wave

GERIATRIC UNIT
S.O.T.O

THE GIFT GOLDEN GATE





ILLUMINATI
NOVUS ORDO SECLORUM
VIRUS

somewhere between hardcore and catchy punk with full-on screaming vocals at all times. You don't need much of a hook for your song when it's only 35 seconds long, but MOLEDEBATER put one in there for you anyway. You win. They win. Punks win. If that shit interests you, go ahead and jump on this one because they only pressed 100 copies. (GH)
(self-released)

MUCOPUS – "La Scatola" CD

Foot to the floor Italian hardcore in the late '80s *"we finally figured out how to play and slowed it down a bit to make the shit more powerful"* tradition. A few catchy riffs, but they have the most success when they beat the shit out of a simple three note banger (see "Alpha e Omega"). Powerful meat/potatoes hardcore punk from start to finish with just enough frills to keep it interesting. A mid '90s act, MUCOPUS started squirming again a few years back and dropped this disc in our laps earlier this year. Welcome back. (WN)
(self-released)

NECROPHILIA – "Mentalna Pustinja" LP

NE! Records has given the serious archival treatment to the (arguably) first hardcore band to be formed in Serbia (formerly Yugoslavia). Looking at the photos in the huge booklet, it's hard to imagine what it could possibly be like to be a punk in the post-Tito netherworld Belgrade had to offer in the '80s. I will venture to say that "Choose the Struggle or Die in Apathy" was not just some hollow slogan thrown around in some punker than thou pissing contest. This is some very raw, angry as fuck music without even the slightest whiff of pretense. As with many bands from the region there is a dark melodic undercurrent within the bass lines. A friend once attributed this to the fact that KILLING JOKE was one of the only bands from the west that extensively toured behind the Iron Curtain. This is definitely worth seeking out and if you are lucky enough your copy will come with a CD of bonus material. Definitely the real deal. (JK)
(NE!)

NEEDLE EXCHANGE / SCRAPS – split EP

SCRAPS is from London. They play fast, catchy garage punk. The music is a little bit '90s, a little bit '00s. Their second song "Wild" is my favorite song of the month. NEEDLE EXCHANGE is from Berlin. They play garage rock. It is a bit mellower than SCRAPS with a fuzzy modern style. Great record. (CK)
(No Front Teeth)

NITE SCHOOL – "Pleaser" EP

Five short blasts of catchy, thrashy punk out of Cleveland, OH. Apparently NITE SCHOOL is no more and there are only 100 copies of this record. Too bad on both counts 'cos this sounds cool. (CK)
(Sauce Pan)

NOTHING OF MERIT – "Monolith" EP

Whoa I haven't heard a record like this in ages. Somehow Houston's NOTHING OF MERIT have convincingly recreated the sound of tuneless late '80s thrash. Well, one side is thrash, the other side is more anthemic, hardcore punk with endearing dual hardcore male/fem crust vox. I remember getting into hardcore in the '90s and it seemed like there were endless records of bands with serious sounding names playing blurred speedcore and glorified polka beats, but then that shit got passé for emo and bubblegum shite, so hearing this now is like a breath of fresh air. Sounds like a HC demo tape from 1987. On pink wax. (GB)
(Reason For Resistance)

ODD MAN OUT – "Sold Out" EP

This is some dark side of straightedge type shit, like how SLAPSHOT was the antithesis to all the crew/unity nonsense that was huge in NYC in the late '80s. Instead of framing straightedge as a positive choice, the songs seem to chastise those who have left it, or those that have never embraced it (*"Fake band, fake man / Change colors, try to hide"; "Once felt strong, we had our friends / Over my shoulder, am I what's left?"*). It's a great record because it's stripped down and uncompromising in its content, and musically it forgoes unnecessary flourishes and filler parts. Production and structure-wise, take any A-side cut (probably "XXX" though) and you've found a lost track from the *Only The Strong* Victory Records comp. ODD MAN OUT could have toured with CONFRONT. The B-side to this record is pure knuckle dragging joy. "Pound for Pound" perfectly describes the feeling everyone gets when they wish they could deck some asshole at a show. It's street justice. It's something every disaffected punk or hardcore kid can relate to. ODD MAN OUT is musical catharsis in its simplest and most poignant form. Top ten record of the year. (MW)
(Warthog Speak)

ORDEN MUNDIAL – "El Nuevo Sonido Balear" EP

Another gold ticket winner from Mallorca's finest. This one may be short, but it certainly is very goddamn sweet. "El Gobierno / Desesperanza" eloquently mashes together two blazing bangers with just a brief haze of feedback-laden noise, making it play out like a live set one-two punch to the thorax. Then comes the icing on the platter. The side long, "Sombras Clavadas" is exactly the scum drenched noise dirge to kick any sugar-coated sweet tooth right out of a stinking rotten mouth. (JK)
(La Vida Es Un Mus)

OUTREAU – "Double Hate" EP

If OUTREAU were a band in the '90s, they would be the slower, French counterpart to OXYMORON, the only difference being that OUTREAU probably listened to a little more hardcore and a littler less ADICTS. What sets this band apart is that they rely on the same dirty aesthetic as their that French contemporaries in RIXE—the low-fi guitars, the dead sounding drums, the grainy vocals—but they have a '90s sensibility, akin to a less polished ANTI-HEROES circa their *Election Day* 7". For fans of: scarves with blue and red stripes on them, Italian shoes, and the Daniel Craig *James Bond* films. (MW)
(UVPR Vinyles)

PARTY ANIMAL – LP

Oh, I get it. This is like a hardcore concept album. Or something. I'm impressed that they somehow got that insane canned guitar distorto bass sound like NEANDERTHAL or Slap-a-Ham shit or whatever. But they also have like twenty songs on a LP, which is prolly cool if they are your friends' band funny jokes or hype scenestars but to an old guy like me I am literally exhausted. I would've preferred this band in six-song 7" EP format without the sampled hip-hop interludes. (GB)
(Party Animal)

PATSY – "Tuley Tude High/Paradise"

Contender for 45 of the year…so fucking sick! Absolutely raging *Hardcore California*-style pummel, coulda been mistaken for a band on Dangerhouse but PATSY is so catchy and non-cookie cutter compared

to other acts that try such endeavors in this Xeroxed modern age. It's so cool hearing something that harkens back to an era that has been totally recycled in so many tired ways by modern hardcore punks, but that is fucking fresh and killer and incendiary. Candice's voice has the snot and danger of Alice Bag, but if she sang for the CIRCLE JERKS or something! Something about—maybe the Agnew brother influences—reminds me of a sped up/tougher MIKA MIKO. The guitar sound is ferocious and the riffs are the coolest. I love this record in a relentless manner! Gimme more. (LG)
(Total Punk)

PIÑÉN – "Emancipación" EP

I didn't expect anything less from PIÑÉN's vinyl debut: brief, brutal, incisive and urgent. This Barcelona two-piece resides in the camp of the more stripped-down, sincere, straight-to-the-point minimal anarcho-hardcore of FIRMEZA 10, OTAN and LAS OTRAS. No frills necessary. The packaging reiterates this essential formula with a well made sleeve opening into a booklet with lyrical content and artwork, all forming one seamless unit with the dust sleeve so that it resembles a sort of vinyl-zine more than just a standard 7". They assert that their music is an end in itself and a reaction to all forms of oppression with lyrics about liberatory politics, indignation towards superficial Barcelona fashion punks, and other daily frustrations. You need to get your hands on some of this catharsis. (LT)
(Hurricane / self-released)

POINT BLANK – "No More" EP

This band bills itself as NYHC. That may just be because of geographic locale because the vibe on this record sounds more like it comes from California. More specifically, an early '90s sound reminiscent of IGNITE, GUTTERMOUTH, or even PENNYWISE's second record *Unknown Road*. The only band from New York that I can think of that reminds me of POINT BLANK is H2O. For fans of: driving your kids to soccer practice, ice cream in winter, and whiskey on the rocks in your favorite recliner after a long day of work. (MW)
(Not Like You)

PREDATOR – "Drag/First to Know"

This band's *The Complete Earth* LP from last year is an identifiably Greg King-affiliated banger that's full of creativity, attitude, hardcore leanings, and modern garage weirdness, but unfortunately most of what made that record so great didn't make it to these two songs. "Drag" rides on a morose hook and happens to be heavily reminiscent of "Amoeba" via Hozac down to the chorus backups and the way the drum segues from the verse into the chorus. "First to Know" is also mid-paced but a little more down in the dirt, and doesn't really go anywhere. Skip this and get the aforementioned LP. (DG)
(Total Punk)

P.S.O. – "My Way Out" CD

This disc is pretty easy to get into. These SoCal kids have energetic, short songs—the CD is ten tracks in sixteen minutes. They're catchy enough, mostly being simple and fast but good at the NYHC-style mid-tempo beatdown. Yeah, it's by the numbers, but the enthusiasm shows. The lyrics threw me off, though. They're mostly anti-trend and being true, typical but impassioned, though there's one seeming religious line ("he gave us a brain"). Another song says, "when it's convenient, you want equal rights / every opportunity you get, you throw out the race card / you match the pic, but you are a hypocrite." I'm not sure what they're getting at, but it sounds like some Fox News shit. They also sing about killing cops, fighting roller bladers, and being die-hard skaters. "When it's no longer cool, you'll see me at the park with the Lemon Grove punks 'cause it's carved into my heart." I was pretty stoked before I saw the sketchy lyrics. (JM)
(Not Like You)

PURE SHIT – "Beyond God" EP

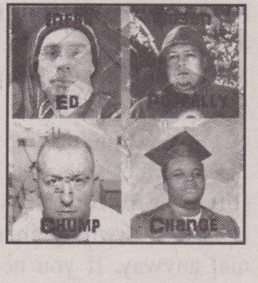
Rarely has an introduction gotten me this juiced to hear a record…and PURE SHIT deliver. Space-fi noise / grind steeped in the classic WCPV traditions until tannic. The combination of bass, drums and saxophone makes such an incredible racket, but it comes together just before you think it has fallen apart for good…when you think they are dropping nonsense, you realize what you are holding is actually Supreme Knowledge. For the few readers who find GASP just a little too palatable. (WN)
(Lament)

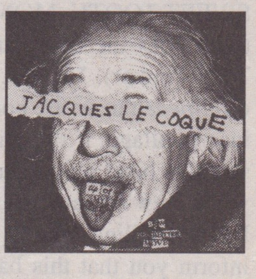
VINCE RAY'S LOSER MACHINE – "Red Rocket 88/Voodoo Boots"

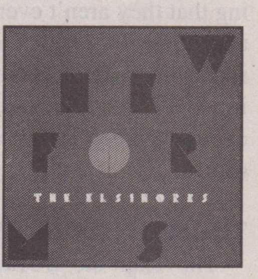
If you actually have the stones to rev your sideburns, you may detect a faint whiff of some positive shit here (JESSE HECTOR, COUNT BISHOPS and maybe a few other saints of the early Chiswick Records set) wafting amid the overwhelming scent of caramelized fuzzy dice. But the words "2015 UK Rockabilly" will probably have you running away in terror before you even lend an ear, so who gives a shit? Not a barf-fest, shockingly. (MC)
(Property of the Lost)

RAZZAPPARTE – "Brucia!" CD

This is the 20th anniversary release of this Italian Oi! band that I've never heard of. The only thing Oi! about this with the exception of "Caos – Oi Mix" is the bad shout-along choruses in Italian. Otherwise its just badly composed punk with horrible musical interludes that combines elements of ska, FLOGGING MOLLY, IRON MAIDEN and....PABLO CRUISE!? No, really. Their attempts at being musically diverse and interesting are plain annoying and not appreciated. Let's hope there's not a 30th anniversary for my golden years when I'm doing reviews in a home with a hearing aid eating Alpo. Kill me. (RO)
(Rusty Knife / Strength Thru Oi!)







Force of Nurture

RIK & THE PIGS – “Pig Sweat/Feed the Animal”

Portland pure hate pure pig music recorded out of the back of a box truck full of pig heads unloading next to the Clement Street farmer’s market. This is probably too stiff a drink for Portland’s *PORK* crowd, but if I was wrong about that I’d be in denial anyway. If you need next of kin info to figure out what this sounds like, look to SWEET TOOTH, MONGOLOID, LUMPY (who does the cover art on this particular Total Punker). Vintage pinups and *Human Centipede* fan art are both represented in the insert collage, if that gives you any idea. I saw this band play in an alley between two youth crew sets at OHC this Summer, which I’m not telling you to brag, but simply to inform you that this band is likely to take over alleyways, traffic medians, pedestrian overpasses, and bike lanes in your neighborhood. Pick this up if you were disappointed by the VIDEO LP. (EW)
(Total Punk)

THE RIPPERS – “I Wanna Know Something About/Words You Never Said”

Although the RIPPERS play somewhat frantically, they also exude a laid-backness that sounds really nice. They project a feeling that they aren’t even trying which I find appealing. Two songs of fuzzy style garage rock sung with an Italian accent. It is nothing too out of the ordinary, yet charming enough to keep me listening. (CK)
(Surfin’ Ki)

THE SCIENTISTS – “Blood Red River” LP

The leap the SCIENTISTS took from their punked-pop debut LP (also re-ish’d via Numero) to *Blood Red River* is perhaps too large to reasonably chart. It loses a lot of folks who start at the beginning. That said, you’ve just gotta know that the real-deal genius of the band, and by extension Kim Salmon, begins when they landed in the swamp. *Blood Red River* revealed the SCIENTISTS as world-class conduits of primal rock’n’roll teachings, reapplied (with murk) in a way entirely their own. “When Fate Deals Its Mortal Blow,” the tune that opens *Blood Red River*, can be placed alongside “Swampland” as one of their most influential moments. Pretty cool that Yanks won’t have to scrounge to hear this band any longer. World-beater rock’n’roll, right here. (MC)
(Numero Group)

THE SCIENTISTS – LP

Well, before they were a spooky goth post-punk band, they were a cute pink-and-polka-dots punk pop band (any rocker worth their leather knows this, of course). This is their first LP! It unfortunately doesn’t have anything near the quality pop classics like “Frantic Romantic” or “Last Night” (two perfect songs that I’m glad aren’t buried on this mostly placid LP), but the tunes are passable and it’s a good grab for the legions of drooling Australian punk fans out there. (BB)
(Numero Group)

JULIETTE SEIZURE AND THE TREMOR-DOLLS – “When I Leave You” EP

This is a good month. The hits just keep coming. This one is straightforward power pop that just doesn’t stop. The energy level is ten. The female vocals are shouted, but only because she’s consumed by the music. Hell, we’ve even got some handclaps. There’s a sense of energy that reminds me of SWEET BABY. (KK)
(self-released)

SELECT SEX – “Strategies Against Amateurs” LP

Guitars are tortured and brutalized, vocals shred chords three houses away, and the rhythm section is so deliberately punishing that it makes you wonder what you did wrong when you dropped the needle. The focus required to create and document a collection of tracks like this is astounding; “Band-Aids & Sand” almost sounds like a split fukkn song between two different bands, and the title track that follows is guitar driven indie rock’s worst nightmare *(because you see, fancy people, this shit can still have teeth…and it’s fukkn better when it does)*. A chaotic and commanding record drawing equally from ’80s noise rock and ’90s US hardcore but avoiding all of the trappings associated with forced subgenre classifications. LA’s SELECT SEX are heavier than the heavy bands, rock harder than the rocking bands, and more technically proficient than the mathy bands…and they do it all within confines that only they seem able to define. Sold. (WN)
(Our Voltage)

SHADOW IN THE CRACKS – LP

Every tune outta SHADOW IN THE CRACKS, a new alter ego from some BLIND SHAKE boys, is designed to bubble over and engulf this listener. You know it’s coming, so it’s never shocking… but it’s never ineffective either. By the end of any given song here, you’re shirtless and pulling some goddamm Earth-Mama séance dance bullshit that you never even knew you were capable of. You’re still punk though. Really. Anyway, this lot really knows what they’re doing with a psych lean and I’d trust them with that above most of their peer group. I’ll be blasting this around 4:00 AM in total darkness one night soon, no doubt. (MC)
(Goner)

SHADOW LAUGHTER – “Nightmare Future” EP

South Florida street punks finally make their way to wax after a couple of demo tapes. Pretty by-the-books stuff, but man, the “Oi!” chant in “S.L.A.” had me hooked so fukk it. Driving tracks with a high end buzzsaw guitar and lurching drums, all fronted by clean, shouted vocals assailing the evils of media and the horrors of technology and the general frustrations of life…it’s like if N.O.T.A. were less ripping and more street punk. In general I wish the songs were a little shorter and a little faster, but I ain’t in the band so I don’t really know why they would consult me…but if they had consulted me, then I would’ve told them to switch side A and side B, because those last three tracks are *way* sicker than the first three. (WN)
(self-released)

SICK THOUGHTS – “Aborted World/G.O.O.M.F.”

Baltimore’s one-man wrecking machine tosses out two more flawless, rabid punk songs. Drew Owen barks half sentences spewing with hate and bile. He sounds like something closer to POISON IDEA or even early GG on this record rather than the garage references he’s usually tied down to. The whole fucking thing is brimming with disgust for the human race…and it’s all over in about two or three minutes. This fucking rips. “Aborted world, baptized in piss! This world isn’t worth a shit!” (GH)
(No Front Teeth)

THE SIEGE FIRE – “Dead Refuge” LP

This one is a fine example of modern day melodic crust. It’s got that FROM ASHES RISE / TRAGEDY sound that we all love. They’ve got some pretty sick blast beat parts, and I’d like to hear more of that; they’ve also got some black metal and early UK crust influence, which I’m into. Overall

there's nothing really wrong with this record but I've heard it all before and I'm kind of bored. (BA)
(1859 / Dead Tank)

SNEAKS – "Gymnastics" LP

Minimal mutant disco containing only drum machines, bass, and talked or maybe whispered but never really sung vocals. This is like the lost amazing mind-blower that sounds like a scene (late '70s/early '80s UK) but like nothing that ever existed in that scene, the missing piece between JUDY NYLON and FLYING LIZARDS that the world always needed but maybe never realized. This record is so excellent that I find myself impatiently waiting for it to end so I can go and tell everyone about it and then listen to it again and again and again and again. (MM)
(Danger)

SOFT SHOULDER – "No Draw" LP

The A-side of this album has four tracks of noisy, bass-heavy post-punk—a pig-fuck mashup of the off-kilter rhythms of DOG FACED HERMANS, the funk of RADIO 4, and the angst of GEISHA GIRLS. The B-side is one long track—a semi-improvised trawl through a sewer of repetitive rhythm and guitar manipulation. There are parts that are reminiscent of SHELLAC or later FUGAZI. Truly an exercise in stamina (for the player and the listener). I don't think I ever need to listen to that side again, but the first four songs were good. (AM)
(Gilgongo)

SPERMA – "Züri Punx" EP

Blimey! Early Euro punk lovers and *KBD* fans, this is your jam! Originally released in 1979 on Another Swiss Label, "Züri Punx" (which many of you may recall from *Killed By Death #7*) is about as seminal a punk track as it gets. It also appeared on two of the band's singles (once with "Bombs" and once with "Sinnlos" as B-sides) but Berlin's Static Age has done us all a solid and reissued all three of these jams on one piece of wax. Sung in Swiss German, a spoken-only dialect, the lyrics and vocals do a fantastic job of capturing the spirit of the youth movement—and subsequent punk scene—that was booming across Switzerland in the late '70s and early '80s, alongside bands like KLEENEX, GLUEAMS, TNT, and GRAUZONE. To transliterate: Flower power and Woodstock are shit, there's a punk concert so boredom is gone for a moment, they dream of punk and anarchy, these are the tough Zurich punks. The sloganeering words, unpretentiously simple song progression and naïve execution make for one immensely catchy track whose signature choral melody will stay with you forever: "*Das sind – d' Züri punx / das sind die härte Züri punx.*" It is said that SPERMA learned how to play their instruments on stage but "Bombs" and "Sinnlos" are equally recognizable and memorable—the annoyed vocals on "Bombs," the taut but playful interplay between bass and guitar on "Sinnlos," its dark melodic undertones. In the end, their unsophistication and immediacy gives them the kind of natural charm and sway others affect. To top it off, this comes housed in a beautifully printed folding sleeve, with lyrics and the original cover for the *Züri Punx/Bombs* 45. Timeless and essential! (LA)
(Static Age)

SPLAT – "Negmo" EP

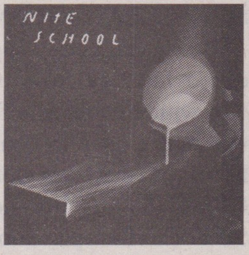
Wasn't sure what to make of this one at first. The band name and the front cover (drawing of a gerbil sitting at a breakfast table with the band members in miniature) say "it's a lil precious." The back cover says, "maybe this is pretty raw" (eight or nine tracks on a 45, Cleveland label). But let's actually listen to it. To be honest, it *is* a little cute, but it is some deliberately weird music and that I appreciate. There are a lot of left turns here. It can veer from REDD KROSS/VOM naïveté to the spindly guitarwork you might find from a band on the Gilgongo catalog. If I haven't made it obvious already, SPLAT is not a pop punk band. That said, on at least one track the vocals remind me a bit of the BANANAS, a band that I've probably maligned as "cute" in the past. I've been wrong before: self-aware ex-punks in their thirties still drink together at BANANAS shows and manage to fuck up each other's antique upholstery after the gig. God knows what they do in Cleveland. (EW)
(Saucepan Recs)

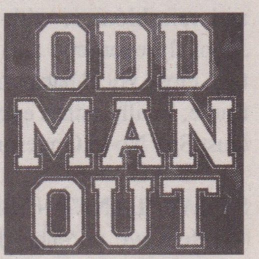
STATEN BRINNER – "Punk Pa Svenska" EP

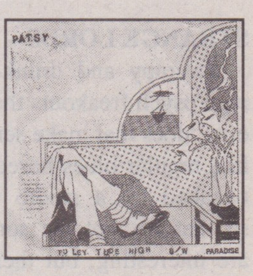
Swedish rock'n'punk that's competent but none too interesting. Reminds me a lot of early GLUCIFER with less wank, or the PLEASURE FUCKERS without the personality. There's a woman's torso or a large breasted man wearing the band's t-shirt for a cover. Supposed to be eye-catching, I guess, but I could give a fuck. (RO)
(Luftslott)

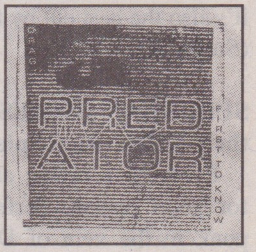
STATIONS – "Work" EP

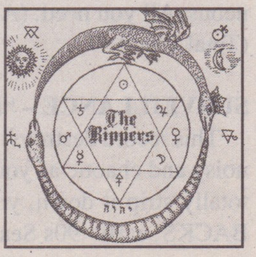
Punky goth in outer space? Holy shit, I am *loving* this. Fusing the anguished shrieks and head-bobbing rhythms of today's dark punk revival with the electronic wizardry of stratospheric proto-punkers like SIMPLY SAUCER, SILVER APPLES and FIFTY FOOT HOSE, Melbourne's STATIONS have hit bad-trip psychedelic gold. "Hunting" is a obvious standout, a pulsingly manic bit of sonic devilry, completing its infernal mission before unraveling into stompy krautrock, while the closer "Master/Disciple" sounds like the throbbing go-go soundtrack to a hideous future sci-fi. The bass does a fantastic job of anchoring down the frenzy, and the laser-guided sonic explorations feel completely integrated into the songwriting process instead of being a distraction or afterthought. This is futurepunk. Consume or be damned. (WB)
(Cold Front)











STAY CLEAN JOLENE – CD

Really can't go wrong with a record label called Just Say No to Government Music. Nor with a debut as effortlessly sublime as this one. I have to confess that I've never heard of their previous UK bands, the GREAT ST LOUIS and the LEIF ERICSSON. This four-piece boils down the essence of that HOT WATER MUSIC / LEATHERFACE / HÜSKER DÜ / ENABLERS sound, and refashions it with gusto and aplomb. Joyously energetic and melodic. Twin guitars, close vocal harmonies and plenty of attitude. Really rather excellent. (RK)
(Just Say No to Government Music)

STRAFPLANET – "Big Feelings" EP

Here we go. The debut EP from Austria's STRAFPLANET crushes all the way through. They *ruuule* at up-tempo, heavy, driving tunes with enough swing to get one going. They get ripping fast and then drag it out, sometimes mixing it up every few bars, sometimes just barreling straight through. Occasionally they lose momentum, but it's a minor complaint. The vocals are rad, sick shrieks. Seven songs on a 7" but it feels like a short LP, in a good way. Great fucking job, get this. (JM)
(Contraszti)

STRANGE LORDS – 12"

Swampy and drunk-sounding dark garage/psych freakouts that never *really* freak out…does that make sense? It kinda sounds like regular blues-based drum/guitar tracks tweaked by a studio engineer on drugs, so that it's not the songs themselves that are interesting, but their presentation. The blissed-out space age lo-fi pop track "Particles" doesn't fit on the record at all…but it's also the best cut by far. (WN)
(Surfin' Ki)

SUBURBAN HOMES – "Conformity in the UK/Television Spies"

Everyone's raving about this band, and for good reason. Perfectly executed DIY punk in the vein of DESPERATE BICYCLES, POP RIVETS, or even ARMITAGE SHANKS. Two great songs, nothing extraneous. All you need. (AM)
(Total Punk)

SURVEILLANCE – "Man" EP

This record destroys! It's pop punk, but as noisy and chaotic as you can make it. If you totally strip it down, you can feel a FASTBACKS, early '90s Seattle core underneath everything. But that core is surrounded by layers upon layers of noise and feedback. Kinda like what the FLAMING LIPS were doing in the late '80s. And it's all blended together in a way that makes the songs infinitely better. This is a fucking great 7". You need this. (FS)
(Various)

SWEET JESUS – "You Destroy Yourself" LP

You Destroy Yourself lies somewhere between GO IT ALONE, the SHRINE, and VALIANT THORR, equal parts amazingcore and rock'n'roll, all with HAVE HEART vocals layered on top (that might be because Patrick Flynn is singing though). It's a pretty odd combo that ends up coming together pretty well. Not in a frenetic ANNIHILATION TIME way where the riffs were punk collages of THIN LIZZY tracks, but *You Destroy Yourself* still has the speed and resonance of an emotional hardcore record, with the guitar flourishes and chord progressions of a rock band. For fans of: Sundays with your kid, making a difference in your community, letting loose on the weekend. (MW)
(Atomic Action)

SWEET TALK – "Double Perfect" LP

There's definitely a love of pop on this slab. It's pretty fucking catchy, but on first listen I thought it was missing a sense of urgency that would make this a really great record. Several listens later, and this thing is growing on me. Cool lyrics, sweet nerd vocals, and I like the songwriting; it just took a few listens to hit me like it should. At times it reminds me of a good mix of WEEZER and MARKED MEN. Fans of the poppy stuff could do much, much worse. (DZ)
(12XU)

TANG SOLEIL – "Outboard Sensory Meridian Response" LP

TANG SOLEIL raves up a rather demented strain of psychedelic garage pop. Take some simple, direct, hooky songwriting of the glam/power pop variety, then filter the whole thing through a combination of lo- and hi-fi: speed it up, slow it down; wow and flutter, sound effects, disembodied voices. Somehow it all works to make a record that is both immediately catchy and has some interesting ideas as well. Grab this. (AM)
(Dusty Medical)

JOHNNY THUNDERS AND THE HEARTBREAKERS – "L.A.M.F. Live at the Village Gate 1977" CD

If you are a true punk rock and roller, you know the HEARTBREAKERS' *L.A.M.F.* album. It practically created a bar-band movement that still lives on. This release was supposed to capture that era live. The recording is listenable but not much more. Better than a bootleg but not even broadcast quality. This is why I'm not big on live punk albums, because without the visual and the volume they aren't the same. Mainstream rock bands punch up and touch up their live releases with overdubs. If you are a HEARTBREAKERS completist, get this. The rest of us just listen to the original LPs (including the much better quality *Live at Max's Kansas City*) for a better representation of this short-lived great band. (RL)
(Cleopatra)

TOXIN III – "Six Song" EP

How are all the best punk records from Louisiana? Long overdue straight reissue of legendary 1982 Louisiana KBD punk EP, one of those lone killers that rests squarely on the wantlists of both punk and hardcore collectors. Hearing this now, I gotta imagine these guys were big BLACK FLAG fans, yelling out verses like a hick KEITH MORRIS. Is there anything better? (GB)
(Jeth-Row Records)

TRAU – "Doblers" EP

Oooohhh, yes. This is what I want. Guitars ever so slightly out of tune, drums mixed kinda weird so the frantic *dupa-dupa* is somehow more prominent than the guitars, and the vocals sound like they are trying to scream their way into the mix, struggling with an engineer determined to keep them just a tad buried. And fukk man, the guitars on "No" are the very embodiment of damaged hardcore. No, *the whole fukkn record is the embodiment of damaged hardcore*, just really fast. A dozen creamers grace this platter, all killer and not even a hint of filler. Yes, this is exactly what I want. (WN)
(Static Age)

TWIN TRACES – LP

The cover of this LP looks halfway between JEAN-MICHEL JARRE and ULTRAVOX, so I thought this would be all electro/new wave jams. It's actually a bunch of heavy-ass, minimal sludge rock. Thankfully it's not dull or annoying like, say, BURNING WITCH—it's more of a mix of

TORCHE, MELVINS, and ENEMY MINE. Loads of repetitious riffs yet without the boredom. It's way more heavy rock'n'roll than heavy metal and nuthin' wrong with that. "Shutout" even uses cowbell to good effect. Very worth checking out. (JD)
(Dirty Slacks)

UNEVEN RUNNING – "Criminal Elegy" CD

UNEVEN RUNNING was a side project band that gigged around Osaka in the late '80s/early '90s, featuring members of Oi! greats GRUESOME and OUKA. The music is pretty much equal parts Oi!, traditional Japanese hardcore and thuggish second wave NYHC (think demo era CRO-MAGS), with the style changing from song to song rather than blending elements of all three genres. The classic bellowed tough-guy Japanese Oi! vocal style is of course in full effect throughout. There are nine tracks from a '93 live gig and three unreleased studio songs on the disc and surprisingly it's the live stuff that the most compelling, with a good recording and stronger songs (including a GRUESOME cut). It's unfortunate that there are no lyrics included, but knowing that GRUESOME and OUKA had ties to the nationalist Samurai Spirit Skinhead (SSS) scene and seeing song titles like "Red and White," it's possible that there are some sketchy words in the mix. I imagine that this disc will get flipped past without a second look in a lot of stores and distros because of the hilarious use of comic sans as the cover font and overall terrible design, but it's worth a listen if you're deep into skinhead music. (AU)
(Bronze Fist)

VIAL – "You're Not Safe" EP

VIAL are from LA, four long-term friends who have been involved in punk for years. This is the first band for some of them though, which on the evidence of this 45 is both unreal and apparent in the coolest manner. Having seen them play a bunch over the past year or so, I'm still blown away every time. Their music is tough yet rudimentary in total early hardcore style, their stage presence is cool and charismatic. Krista is an incredible and iconic front person, with a remarkable voice, like if DINAH CANCER was a tough HC girl. I've seen 'em cover LAST RITES' "Chunks" but they also get compared to FLIPPER and the BAGS! I think of them as a hardcore band but have gotten in arguments with people about it, perhaps because women are never truly "hardcore" according to the general punk populace. I have no idea how anyone could listen to this and not think that it's a hardcore record. The guitar is burly in a classic Touch and Go manner and the lyrics are smart and to the point, interrogating gentrification and gender constructs as well as total alienation/anxiety. I love this band, and this 45 is killer. Buy or die. (LG)
(Cut Rate)

VIRUS – "Illuminati/Vanity"

The VIRUS in question at this time is from the UK and let slip a number of tapes and not much else in the mid '80s. Now, over 30 years later, they pump out two new tunes for a 7", and the years certainly show. The A-side, "Illuminati," showcases the moodiness that was apparent in their past recordings. The song is mid-tempo with flanged guitar and an awesome use of reverse echo on the chorus helps enforce the gloom. The AA-side is a chunkier number that is a little angrier than the leadoff. Although also stuck in second gear, "Vanity" is one of the funniest songs I've heard in a long time. The lyrics kick off with "Facebook generation" and just gets more awesome from there. VIRUS go on to skewer Millennials for posting selfies, being ignorant, doing coke, and generally being lazy and egotistical. It's like an extremely punk old man yelling at you to get off his lawn. The music herein is tired and somewhat trite feeling, so locked into a style these guys learned to play by rote that it's devoid of any real sense of joy or fury. I can't recommend this for anything besides the chuckle it will provide. (LP)
(Loud Punk / Subversive Haircuts)

VVOVNDS – "Descending Flesh" CD

Belgium's VVOVNDS (or WOUNDS) play extremely abrasive hardcore punk with proto-metal and crust influences. The vocals remind me a lot of Winnipeg's CETASCEAN. Proto-grind bits and spurts decorate the basic crust punk flavor, like Finland's HAAPOJA, but the overall sound is much looser, sludgy and barbaric powerviolence. "Coins" is the standout track for me, with an undercurrent of reverberating industrial sonic landscapes. When this lets go, it's not your typical extreme music offering. An awesomely weird collage of seashells or broken records or something on the cover make a ghastly face in blackness. (JR)
(Hyper Tension)

WET BRAIN – "Not Sorry" LP

Ever heard of L7? BABES IN TOYLAND? FRIGHTWIG? This is a worship of all those things with some riffs that lean more towards a major label metal edge and pretty awful rhymey I-just-discovered-feminism-I-hate-all-men 101 lyrics. If I had discovered them as a teen I know they would hold a special place in my heart but as an adult it's just kind of cheesy goof. (MM)
(Girl Problem)

WHITE JAZZ – "Can't Relate" EP

My guess is dudes with beards and flannels who were reared on Deathwish/early Bridge Nine bands, mid-period BLACK FLAG, and hints of whatever noise rock or post-rock bands people ask for nights off from their jobs at Whole Foods to go see. Tight, crisp, well-produced modern hardcore that's often interrupted by dissonant guitar work or squealing leads that tend to be particularly high-octave. It's done ex-

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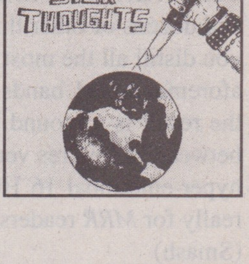

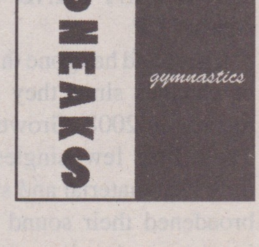

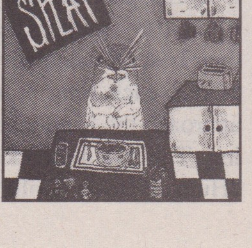

tremely well, pushing this out of norm or amateur territory. "The Screen" starts with and comes back to a lost-at-sea post-rock riff, which is cool, and in general, the songs hold my interest. I have a higher tolerance for this stuff than most, and I gotta say that I like this record. (DG)
(Atomic Action)

WIMPS – "Suitcase" LP

WIMPS sound bored. Who can blame them? Like hanging out with that drip of a friend who you like, but can really get you down after an hour, a full record of WIMPS is a bit much. WIMPS play a grunge-y indie rock with touches of poppish punk. The music has a nice sound and I am all for that disaffected vocal style. I just prefer it in smaller doses. My favorite song on *Suitcase* is "Basement" a slow, dirgy tune that gets really claustrophobic as it goes along. The singer can barely be bothered to get the words out. It is odd in all the right ways. (CK)
(Kill Rock Stars)

THE YOU AND WHAT ARMY FACTION – "Glum" LP

This LP came with a note that said, "their sound lies somewhere between the EX, SONIC YOUTH, SWANS, BIRTHDAY PARTY, FUGAZI, DEAD MOON, and dozens of other things." Apparently, if you distill all the most horrible parts of the aforementioned bands (and other things), the result is a "sound that lies somewhere between" a low-res version of TOOL and a hyper-emotional 16 HORSEPOWER. Not really for *MRR* readers. (JK)
(Smash)

YOUR PEST BAND – "Never Fall You Again" EP

This band has gone through a fair amount of changes since they started putting out records in 2008. Growth, some might say. Their first few singles are undoubtedly their best material and since then they have broadened their sound from pop punk to incorporate jangly garage and a SPRINGSTEEN style of rock'n'roll. Sometimes it works phenomenally. Sometimes it's… it's not my thing. This three-song EP has their best moments distilled onto one small platter, each song representing a different approach the band takes towards songwriting. The A-side track is like a punk rock "Hungry Heart," followed up by a B-side featuring a track of killer pogo pop and the last track's '60s garage burner style. All super fun, great tracks! If you've never heard YOUR PEST BAND before, this is the place to start. If you already like them, this will be one of your favorite YPB records to date. Great record! (FS)
(Brassneck)

YOUTH BRIGADE – "First Demo, Summer 1981" EP

At long last, an official vinyl version of one of the all-time greatest punk demos, from Washington D.C.'s YOUTH BRIGADE. Versions of four of these eight tracks would later find their way on to the band's sole EP, *Possible*, and the *Flex Your Head* compilation, and "I Object" appeared on the *20 Years of Dischord* box set, but the other three tracks can only be found on this demo. You need this. (JU)
(Dischord)

YUM-YUCKERS – "A Tragic History" EP

I reviewed this Long Island band's demo ten issues back and compared the thick guitar sound to their neighbors in LATTERMAN and IRON CHIC, but I'm hearing a lot more of their own personality on this release. The production is a little slicker and the ties to Long Island melodic punk are still prevalent, but the guitar tone is just fucking *huge* on this record…like arena rock style. It sounds great. The singer flies along somewhere between NEW BOMB TURKS and FLESHIES…shouting and forceful, but really carrying the tune. In the closer, "Tales of Corporate Horror," he straight up sounds like Glenn Danzig's little brother or something. This is a solid six-song EP for fans of East Coast melodic punk. (GH)
(Dig My Grave)

V/A – "Fat Music Vol. 8: Going Nowhere Fat" 2xLP

The latest collection/sampler from Fat Records. This is mostly songs from releases in the last three years from Fat bands including SNUFF, BAD COP/BAD COP, NIGHT BIRDS, and pretty much everyone else still on Fat. It does include exclusive tracks from SWINGIN' UTTERS, WESTERN ADDICTION and NOFX. (RL)
(Fat Wreck)

V/A – "La Force Dans la Oi! Vol. 2" EP

I don't think I've ever reviewed an actual Oi! record during my four years here at the magazine, which normally I would say is good because I know (and care) fuckall about most of it. Those who are paying attention, whether it's to Oi! or just hot current punk, are probably already familiar with Brest's SYNDROME 81 and Paris's RIXE, and their tracks on here are absolutely smashing. The former has incorporated a brooding element since their near-perfect demo. You'll wanna dance to this equally as hard whether you're more into Oi! or NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS. It's just a perfect punk track. The RIXE track rides on the tupa beat and balances tough gang vocals and catchy bass lines to create serious power. TRAITRE and OUTREAU are new names to me, and while they don't get my pulse running as high as the others, they both stand up well on the comp. TRAITRE stomps along at a comfortable pace while offering some forceful shouts and sweet guitar lines. OUTREAU is the only band singing in English on their contribution, "Spirit," which seems to be about strength through brotherhood, or something. Anyway, it's great! Totally massive comp! (MA)
(UVPR Vinyles)

V/A – "Ork Records: New York, New York" 4xLP box set

Probably the most complete reissue project anyone reading this mag would reasonably contemplate picking up this year at the near $100 retail price point: four LPs covering the first identifiably "punk" label out of Olde '70s New York, Ork Records, whose first vinyl issue was the debut 45 of TELEVISION in 1975, one of those moments in cultural history that in even immediate retrospect became an obvious before/after moment. Since I was heavily invested in my own 4 LP box set experience at that precise moment in 1975 (*Superstars of the '70s* on Warner Special Products, baby!) I have to divine this perspective from reading the hardcover volume included with the box, a chunky doorstop chock full of excellently reproduced b/w photos from mid-late '70s New York City that will make you sigh heavily at all the desperate downtown sleaze'n'malaise on casual display, which drove rents to the point where working artists could actually live in Manhattan. From the LPs you will hear every Ork release, but also 45s that *would* have come out on Ork but for $$$, and so popped out on other contemporaneous indies: recs from CHRIS STAMEY, ALEX CHILTON, LESTER BANGS, etc. Obsessives will need this for the book, and especially for the only-here FEELIES tracks, which are raw as chopped onions. I can't be too mad at my Mom for not buying me that TELEVISION 45 when I was seven, 'cause that *Superstars* box set included the ROLLING STONES, KINKS, BEACH BOYS, JO JO GUNNE, etc. and just a few years later the teenage fans of those groups would be the ones launching the first'n'second waves of punk that fill all the *Killed By Death* comps. Because they would be reacting just like the Ork Records crews to the *other* groups also on that *Superstars* box: JAMES TAYLOR, JUDY COLLINS, AMERICA, BEE GEES, YES…Punk happened for a reason, never forget, and it ignited right here in the U.S.A. on this comp. (RW)

(Numero Group)

V/A – "Vägra Raggarna Benzin: Punk Från Provinserna 78-82, Vol. 3&4" 2xLP

My eyes lit up at the sight of this double-LP in my review pile. The only thing better than getting to review this bad boy is receiving a reviewer copy to take home in order to spend some quality time with 46 songs from 46 bands I've mostly never heard of from one of my favorite periods and geographies of punk history. The *MRR* assigning gods have looked favorably down upon me indeed. This compilation is bejeweled with lesser-known Swedish punk gems recorded between 1978-1982 and I cannot recommend it enough. Some are so little known to a non-Swedish audience that they don't even appear in the *Encyclopedia of Swedish Punk*. These volumes focus on bands from smaller towns and the title appears to this non-Swedish speaker as a combative reference against *raggare*, a bizarre Swedish redneck subculture whose participants trolled punk shows picking fights. Reportedly even SEX PISTOLS and the STRANGLERS experienced the wrath of the loathed *raggare* during their shows in Sweden. Anyway, a lot of these "provincial" bands probably wanted to sound like EBBA GRÖN, but there is also some deviation from this winning formula with the interesting synthy post-punk of male-backed/female-fronted CAIZA and the more hardcore sound executed by SVEA SVIN. Some serious highlights for me include REKLAMATION from the small town of Hjo, and PARAGRAF POP with their infectious power pop. DIABLESSE GRUPP 6 was a ferocious femme three-piece that finally gives me some insight into BURNING KITCHEN's possible influences. WBT and N.O.S. also get totally honorable mentions, reminding me of their Finnish contemporaries RATSIA and KOLLAA KESTÄÄ, also getting a second shot at recognition these days on the reissue circuit. The inserts include mini bios in Swedish for each band. A must-have for fans of Swedish punk, the RAMONES, KBD, Svart Records, etc. I need Volumes 1 and 2. (LT)

(Massproduktion)

V/A – "YPJ-Support" LP

A compilation of female-fronted post-punk bands benefiting the Yekîneyên Parastina Jin, the women's protection units of the leftist Kurdish resistant movement, Yekîneyên Parastina Gel. SVAT MAGI start off this comp with DES ARK-style vocals over some mellow gloom. We know what to expect from BELGRADO, but this offering is a tad lackluster, like maybe this was a D-side. TOTENWALD's frontperson is a banshee wailing over catchy riffs and midtempo drums. CATHOLIC SPIT delivers another banger. FLOWERS & FIRE is lush and haunting as always—their track "Pale Nights" is going on all my future mixtapes. Musically the comp is fucking beautifully curated, but reading the insert was disconcerting. There's very little info on the YPJ, how the money is being given to them, how we can do more support and outreach. It's just an article from *Cvlt Nation* cut and pasted onto a piece of paper. It seems like circle jerk liberal clickbait, glamorizing and objectifying liberation ideologies of non-western origins. In light of the events of the recent past, westerners' blatant Islamophobia and ignorance around non-western cultures and concepts have shone through liberal and even radical ideological facades. It's an ugly and real reminder that westerners have a lot of internal dismantling to do in order to shatter preconceived notions and the manifestations of white supremacy and imperialism in their personal thought processes. A well meaning gesture, but that is sometimes not enough. (AP)

(Suadade)

SURVEILLANCE

VÄGRA
RAGGARNA
BENZIN

YØUTH BRIGADE
RIO THEATRE
FIRST DEMO summer '81
DISCHORD

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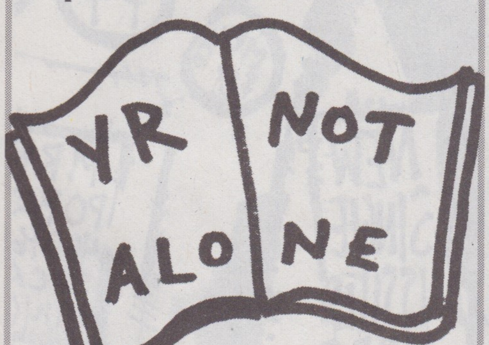
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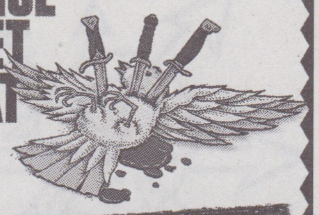

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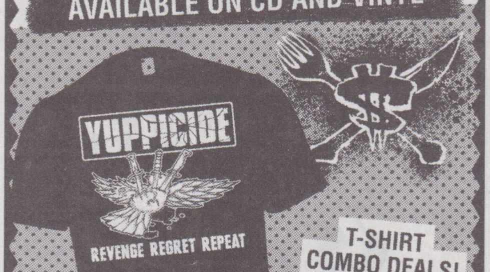
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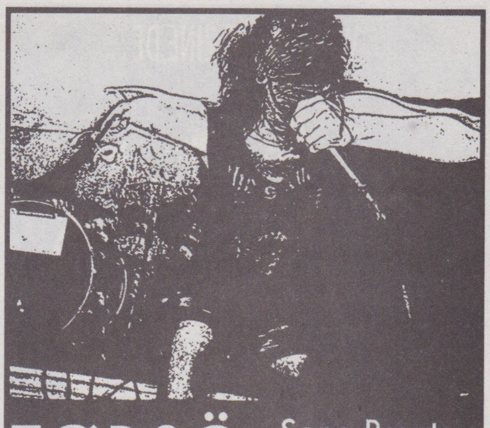

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DON HOWLAND
LIFE IS A NIGHTMARE LP

MANATEEES
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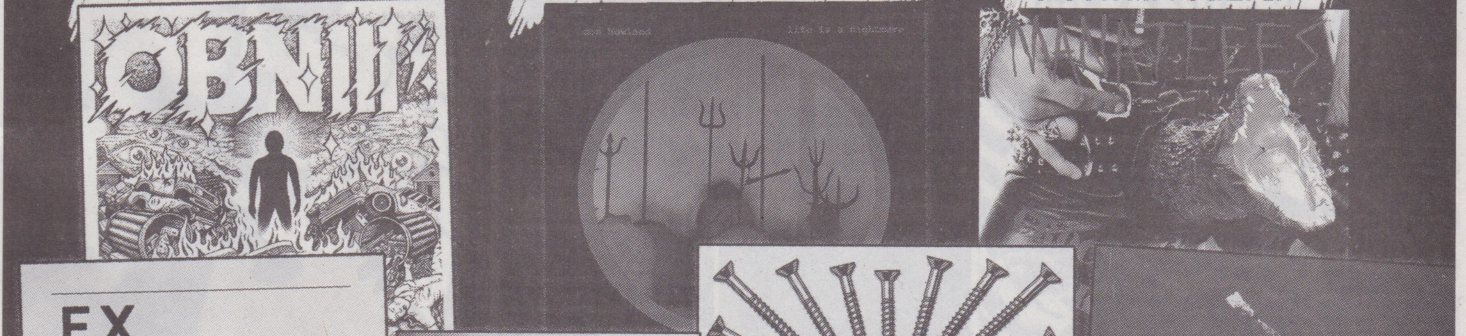
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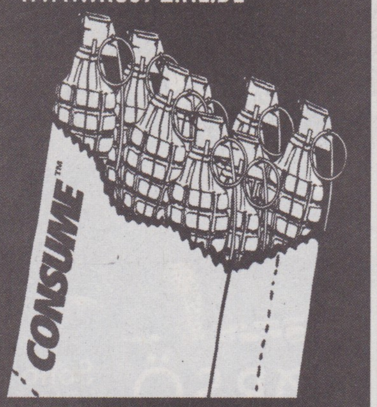

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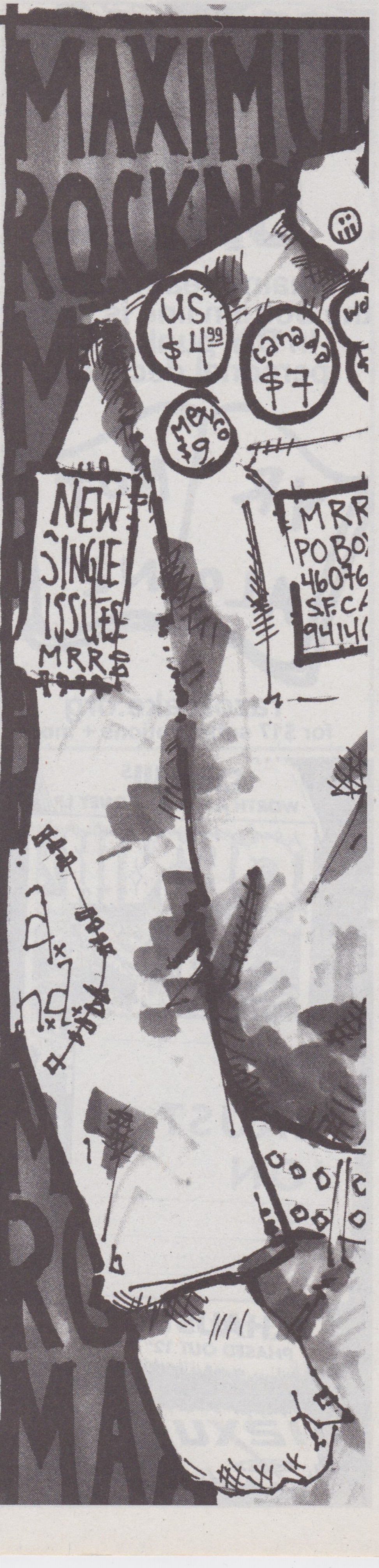

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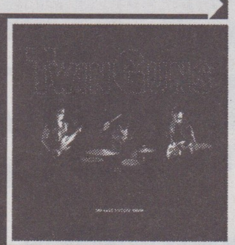

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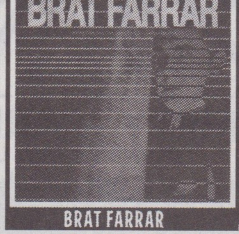

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DEMOS

Send cassettes and CD-Rs to: MRR Attn: Demos, PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146. CD-Rs with no artwork will not be considered. Reviews by Lydia Athanasopolou, Matt Badenhop, Justin Briggs, Robert Collins, Michael de Toffoli, Dan Goetz, Greg Harvester, and Shit Zoo.

ACRYLICS – *Lovely's Slideshow* – These Santa Rosa weirdos are back with another mutant-ass tape. Their music is hard to describe but conjures visions of sad clowns, downers, muddy 45s found in a ditch, and total abandon. It's legitimately uncomfortable music that is meant to pull you out of your comfort zone. They only give you two slimy songs on this tape, but this will have you tracking down their ever-increasing back catalog. (Greg) (2-song cassette, lyrics not included, acrylics.bandcamp.com)

BLACK ABBA – This is so good. Budget rock-style garage punk with a busted-ass synth and fun vocals. There are songs about demons in your mind, lost dogs and using the postal service. I don't really know what else I can tell you. Just trust me on this. It's simple and perfect. They have a 7" out this month too, but I think the tape is better. (Greg) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, holotrash.bigcartel.com)

BLIND DOG – It's loud, fast, blown to shit hardcore punk. Those are all things that I like. I mean, it kinda goes in one ear and out the other, but that's because I'm old…maybe. The recording is unnecessarily shitty and masks what seem to be pretty solid tracks, and there are effects where there don't need to be effects, further complicating my enjoyment. But BLIND DOG didn't do this for my enjoyment, they did this so they could rock, and their tape definitely rocks…but I feel like the "new face of US hardcore" is just dumbed down presentations of interesting punk. And this shit is *so close* to being interesting. Gimme yr tracks, kids—I want fukkn tracks not just sounds. These sounds are furious modern USHC mania, tinges of UK street punk and D-beat shits buried under a fog of chaos. (Robert) (3-song cassette, lyrics not included, blinddog.bandcamp.com, deathsideblackout@yahoo.com)

BLOBS – *Shame* – This shit rules. Clean, jangly guitars and a wimpy synth dominate most of this recording, but they're led through the muck by a singer that I can only describe as exasperated. For the most part, this is raging basement punk, but they throw in some curveballs that will keep you interested. I'm looking forward to hearing more from this band. (Greg) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, morepowertapes.bandcamp.com)

BLOODSUCKERS – *Cheap Trip* – Cool demo here from a Russian band ripping it up in the style of the Japanese D-Beat noise crusters. Maybe less heavy. Lovely stuff. (Justin) (11-track cassette, lyrics in Russian included, runstate-tapes.com)

THE BRISTLES – *Ban the Punshops* – Classic Swedish hardcore from 1983 is given the official tape reissue treatment by Zagreb based Aftermath tapes. Everything about this tape is Punk with a capital P. The BRISTLES—who take their name from the G.B.H. 12" *Leather, Bristles, Studs and Acne*—were a short lived band from Landskrona. Influenced by bands like G.B.H. and the EXPLOITED, they played a fast, raw mix of punk, streetpunk and hardcore, with just the slightest Oi! touch, powered by melodic bass hooks, mean racing riffs, noisy drumming and ticked off vocals. Pogo perfect in every sense. The lyrics and attitude are seminally punk, as is the cover artwork. Songs like "Unemployed 83," "That's Life," "Lost Generation" and "Why Can't I Be Different" are certified jammers. The BRISTLES, along with bands like SÖTLIMPA, ASTA KASK and ANTI-CIMEX to name but a few, would become part of the trailblazing '80s Swedish hardcore / råpunk lineage and also appear on *MRR*'s *Welcome to 1984* comp with their track "Don't Give Up." Limited to 100, this tape is already sold out, but you can enjoy the music at thebristles.bandcamp.com (Lydia) (15-song cassette, lyrics not included, prisonerof_state@yahoo.com)

BROKEN WINDOWS – A nice debut from Grand Rapids, MI. The first track really hits hard and is over before I'm ready (which is a good thing!). The urgency and snarl taper off a bit after that, but they maintain a good groove throughout the next six songs, highlighted by a grungy guitar tone and forceful vocal stylings. No solos, no frills, no surprises, just pure power. Yes, they take their name from the broken window policing theory, and they refuse to be pushed out! (Matt) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, independentfries.com, brokenwindows616.bandcamp.com/releases)

BRUISER QUEEN – *Let's Fall In Love Again All Over: Home Demos 20101-2015* – Somewhere between loose Simple Machines/Olympia '91 indie and straight singer/songwriter tracks with sweet but powerful lead vocals that started out reminding me of JEWEL with BJÖRK tendencies. Music is stripped down guitar/drums, basically a platform for the vocals, and these recordings highlight Morgan's vocals way more than the band's "proper" releases which are more on the garage/indie/power pop trip (and are very good). Don't worry about BRUISER QUEEN, the vocals got got dirtier later on, and they always have a breathy edge that is wholly interesting and besides, and this is just a collection of demo recordings anyway…but you should definitely worry about me ever reverting to JEWEL for comparisons. (Robert) (9-song cassette, lyrics not included, bruiserqueenmusic.blogspot.com)

CHAOS TRIBE – *All Punks Go For It / 9 Horrendous Trax* – Coming out of the parched hell that is Fresno, CHAOS TRIBE, alongside their compatriots MUTANT ITCH, have sprouted an oasis of ugly noise in central California. I've been lucky enough to drink from said oasis a number of times and CHAOS TRIBE always blow me away with their commitment to straightforward raw noisecore. No trend, no fame, just a direct statement: "No quiero musica." *9 Horrendous Trax* is an older recording, released in time for the All Punks Go For It show back in September with TOM AND BOOT BOYS, EEL, and a slew of others. Both tapes are great, but you need to just see them live. By the time this issue prints they will have trotted up the coast to play Cacophonie Nights in Portland, so I've already secured my next chance. (Shit) (9-song cassette, lyrics included)

CHEAP WIG – *Agoness* – Were you bummed when the singer from WHITE LUNG started writing for stick-your-subculture-mining-up-your-ass-*Vice* and then you thought "shit man, I kinda wish that band was more weird and punk sounding anyway?" May I introduce fellow Canadians CHEAP WIG? Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying they sound like WHITE LUNG, but the vocals have *that* kind of power, and the drums have *that* kind of drive (high praise on both accounts), but this CHEAP WIG has an edge that their BC colleagues can't touch (check the end of "Watch It Rot" and tell me I'm wrong). Super twisted and powerful guitar-driven indie/punk (and make no mistake that the whole thing here is *punk* as shit) with serious teeth and vocals that are full of venom and simply unfuckwithable. Sorry for the arguably pointless other-band-name-dropping, but I feel like CHEAP WIG has filled a void…and I like feeling complete. (5-song cassette, lyrics included, cheapwig.bandcamp.com)

CHRISTIAN DIOR – *Patriot Glass/Dioria* – Loose and heavy indie music with gratuitous '90s alt-rock tendencies. The ethereal production masks the more forgettable tracks but it masks them well, sparse and airy moments colliding with colossal discordant waves during the more successful moments. Most of the demo lacks focus but there are "worth it" moments when they hit their target, and I can easily see this band getting really good. (Robert) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, christiandiorwi.bandcamp.com)

CINDERBLOCK – *No Future* – Top notch high energy anarcho-skinhead punk from Boston. Hooks galore, and if you aren't careful you'll find yourself singing *"whose voice / is voiceless?"* to a song assailing the consumption of animals (thanks for that, by the way). Anti-cop, anti-nuke, anti-disco… and apparently pro-punk. Not just regular punk, but punk of the highest order. You can call it UK punk or UK82 or street punk, or even hardcore… and you wouldn't be wrong, but I just call this shit punk. No frills, just good riffs and a meandering bass and forceful, confident vocals. All I want that this demo doesn't give me is more. But that is what the future is for…right? (Robert) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, dbrdistro.storenvy.com)

CORTARMAO – While I question the point of a tri-fold digipack CD for a seven minute, two song demo, my job is to describe the contents and not the delivery method…so: Noodly and nerdy '90s German metalcore meets methodical and mathy CAVE IN-styled US metallic indie/hardcore. Chaotic and spastic with nothing to really grab onto but these kids are going for it, and nothing here is half assed. (Robert) (2-song CD-R, lyrics included, cortarmao.bandcamp.com)

CRAZY BULL – *Mold Crow* – The opening guitar tone is bang-on PENTAGRAM and the track kicks in and it's like *Vengeance*-era PRIEST with RAINBOW-era DIO vocals. And yes, I am well aware of how high I just set the bar and these monkeys nail this shit. This was my second tape in what was meant to be a marathon of new demo reviews, but I just sacked that plan and I'm drinking beer and listening to heavy metal instead. (Robert) (3-song cassette, no lyrics, crazybullphilly@gmail.com)

CRY COYOTE – *After The Fact* – Wisconsin grunge/cowpunk hybrid that casually ventures into straight retro country. Slide guitar on the harder numbers is welcome, but the vocals are too weak for the country parts and they don't *actually* swing like they need to. A live radio set, studio session and a few dirty live recordings *(best part of the tape for this guy)* make up this posthumous release. (Robert) (17-song cassette, lyrics not included, onetrackmind.bigcartel.com)

CULT SYNDROME – Demented hardcore punk of the darkest order from London. They do that plodding 1-2-1-2 beat to death….but they do it right, and when they're hitting on all cylinders (like "Banality" or "Psychic Violence" for example) CULT SYNDROME are just unfuckwithable. Just a few tasteful hints of the modern goth punk resurgence, but without any of the lame-o trappings that make that shit a yawnfest for rockers—these punks play the dark shit punk as fukk, and it's a welcome injection. Yes. Good shits. (Robert) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, cultsyndrome.bandcamp.com)

DANGER – *Demo 2012* – Lost demo recordings from 2012 from this Montreal band. Flawlessly executed, UK82 style punkcore on this one, drowning in guitar wankery that wholly adds to the greatness of these tracks. I am a sucker for this style when it's done right and not repetitive, and this is a prime example of how to do it right. Awesome. (Justin) (6-track cassette, lyrics not included, runstate-tapes.com)

THE DEACONS – *Beat Up the World* – Members of BETA BOYS and CRYOGENICS play some seriously raging punk in this newish band from Kansas City, MO. It's a little more straightforward and '70s influenced than the current crop of Midwestern freak punk, but played at lightning fast 4/4 speed. Shit is seriously killer. Get it now. (Greg) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, thedeacons.bandcamp.com)

THE DEAD PAWNS / GAS STATION OF LOVE – *Songs We Sing For Our Lord* – The DEAD PAWNS play stripped-down, catchy punk with a RAMONES or early WIPERS simplicity to it, along with the RAMONES' sense of humor and vocal dichotomy between emotive grunts and soulful crooning. GAS STATIONS OF LOVE offer up a bit of everything, and most of it I could do without. The tinny drum machine tracks, sleazy PRIMUS bass-driven songs, and campfire acoustic number with pitch-shifted vocals are all dogshit, but the first song is a cool down and dirty garage punk number with a great rumbling bass hook, so there's that. (Dan) (17-song CD, lyrics not included, myspace.com/thedeadpawns, gasstationoflove.bandcamp.com)

DEATH CAMP – *Live at the Bug Jar* – Wow, this is way different than I remember DEATH CAMP sounding on the 7". The nasty mosh stompers are almost entirely gone and in that empty space has fallen something similar to a dark, slithering, metallic rock'n'roll combo of DANZIG / SAMHAIN and maybe FEAR, with crazy dueling guitar leads. Not gonna be for everyone in Maxiland, but shockingly good for the style and shockingly different than what I expected. And the recording quality is better than most band's records. (Justin) (11-song cassette, lyrics not included)

DISASTRONAUT – Instantly familiar sounding, yet I can't place it. HICKEY-esque presentation without the pop hooks…even though there are plenty of hooks. Vocals are kinda monotone drones, almost whiny, and are really what raise the whole thing into the ethereal realm. This is distorted space age basement punk with a penchant for things unconventional and interesting. If nothing else, I'm intrigued. (Robert) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, disastronaut.bandcamp.com)

DRIP – Delayed-out oompah-oompah hardcore punk from this Montreal band. Not too far off from what their neighbors to the west, S.H.I.T. are up to. (Justin) (8-track cassette, lyrics included, runstate-tapes.com)

DUDES – *Ultra Vauge* – Pretty simple minded un-pop punk. Just dudes enjoying themselves writing about stuff like having fun, not having fun anymore, being empty headed and indecisive, blowing everything off. Pretty dumb dudes but the guitarist can definitely rip, barreling through with his fat fucking tone through a phaser to keep it interesting. It's pizza and beer punk, just bros bein' dudes. (Michael) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, morepowertapes.bandcamp.com)

FIRE RETARDED – *Live At Turkeyfest 2014* – Maximum energy grungy garage punk rock'n'roll, recorded live and delivered with power. Fuzzed-out frequently wanking guitars add a welcome touch of psychedelia…though it might actually be dementia. Either way, that little smattering of something different helps. (Robert) (13-song cassette, lyrics not included, rainyroadrecords.com

GARTER – Tough and in-your-face punk from Springfield, IL. They're more on the edge of rock than a lot of current bands in American punk these days, but in the same vein as VEXX, i.e. still propulsive and interesting. Good hooks. This is a great demo and I feel like this band will only get better with time. (Greg) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, blacksheepspringfield.com, bggaleck134@gmail.com)

GAS STATION OF LOVE – *Learning Curve* – One man no-fi drum machine punk/garage/noise hybrid. Chunks of this could sneak onto a *Las Vegas Grind* comp and chunks are just bedroom recording gone wrong, but sometimes the joy of listening is the adventure. (Robert) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, nogrecords.tictail.com)

GHALI – *Death Curse* – Airy guitar-driven garage pop. At times the whole thing sounds like a lazy take on hip lo-fi trends, but then "No Future" makes me want to listen over and over, even if it's just a more successful take on current hip lo-fi trends. Us old punks gotta remember that sometimes shit is hip and trendy because it's good… (Robert) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, getresurrected.com)

GUSH – *MRR* has this tongue-in-cheek rule that you can't sing during the mosh part and this band already broke that rule in the third song. It's fine with me. I don't give a shit. Fast as fuck-core (think WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? but falling apart) that breaks down into sick ass mosh riffs and fronted by a woman who's vocals are 100% in the red at all times. Pure anger and disgust…and partying full on. (Greg) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, ooeygooeytapes.bandcamp.com)

HATEHUG – Fierce rockin' Berliners highlighted by a rough, feisty recording and a ripping hardcore attack. Aside from the first track, a plodding creepy crawl low-mosh number that hits all the current bullet points, HATEHUG do a thing that doesn't consent to pigeonholing—single note riffing for the weird parts, forceful and in your face burners when they want to rage, and everything fronted by vocals strained to the max. Good stuff. (Robert) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, hatehug.bandcamp.com, colossustapes.bigcartel.com)

HEALTH PROBLEMS – *Ugly Man* – HEALTH PROBLEMS hails from Seattle and they play dark, ugly, bass-heavy post-punk that oddly has some moments that remind me of *Ozma*-era MELVINS. They also have some SHELLAC vibes going on… in the sense that they have a lot of jerky, angular time signatures while the singer splits the songs between almost talking and then yelling, but always coherently. It's heavy. It's ugly. (Greg) (16-song cassette, lyrics included, casinotrashrecords.bandcamp.com)

THE HUSSY – *Live on WFMU* – Male/female guitar/drum garage/punk lo/fidelity live/radio mediocre/recording. Fans/only. (Robert) (24-song cassette, lyrics not included, rainyroadrecords.com)

INEPSY – *Unreleased Demo / Loudhouse 2000* – Hell yeah. An unreleased 2000 demo from the greatest group of Motör-beat booze hounds of our generation. All these tracks would later become the first 7", so this the prime era of a great band before the crusty element was replaced by KISS nods. You already know whether or not you want this. (Justin) (4-track cassette, lyrics not included, runstate-tapes.com)

JUMP THE BLINDS – Ultra cool Buffalo punk shits. Clean East Bay Ray-esque guitars and a warbly singer belting out soulful leads that sometimes break into screams. The tracks swing like motherfukkrs, and there's a snotty irreverent cool about the whole thing that will appeal to garage punkers, drunken ragers and people not too cool to shake their asses. Tape contains the *Kill Kill Bangkok* and *Hooker Chemical* recordings, for those keeping track. Excellent. (Robert) (15-song cassette, lyrics not included, drugparty.org)

KAPPA CHOW – After reviewing three kinda pleasant but basically dull garage-esque punk things, this one flipped me on my head. It's the same shit, but *so much better*. You gotta have pop sensibilities to pull this shit off, and KAPPA CHOW are so loose with the hooks that it all sounds effortless. Still filthy, still raw, and still suitable for bashing repeatedly/drunkenly in your...garage. Duh. Top notch. (Robert) (?-track cassette, lyrics not included, kappachow.bandcamp.com)

KHARLOS – *Don't Think About Dying At My Party* – Hi-fi recorded hipster garage rock trying to be party music. Doesn't have much to say, it's all style, 'verbed vocals and pop hooks, same surf beat throughout. They seem like scene famous life-of-the-party bros that learned the most recent cool marketable genre. Famous before even becoming famous, it's background forgettable music starring that band that everyone's heard of so you should too. (Michael) (8-song cassette, lyrics not included, morepowertapes.bandcamp.com)

KNIFEHAND – This cassette is… fine. It's typical modern metal-injected trashy hardcore that sounds like every other band that's doing this. Dueling yelling vocals that sometimes growl but don't change or do anything creative, guitars that play what you'd assume they would, drums that are either calm at 10% or blasting at 100% but always one or the other. You know the formula. Overly wordy like CIRCLE TAKES THE SQUARE but with nothing really that interesting to say. Listen to this when you're all done listening to the last band that sounds like them and then move on to the next one. (Michael) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, knifehand1.bandcamp.com)

KOMMUNION – Fuck yeah! Vicious, unrelenting, raw USHC from Richmond, VA that is brimming with feedback and total hate…or maybe it's brimming with hate. I don't know what the fuck their singer, Marina is screaming about. That's fine. Total annihilation-style riffs that remind me of stuff along the lines of TORSO, CLEANSING WAVE and DISCHARGE-worship bands. Incredible demo. (Greg) (4–song cassette, lyrics not included, kommunion.bandcamp.com, 518 Chimborazo Blvd, Richmond, VA 25225)

M.A.D. – *Nuclear Fucker* – Lowest fidelity imaginable raw D-beat with reverbed vocals and a white, wavering hiss piss passing as music. It's not music, it's fukkn noize, but that is what you want, so you want to get M.A.D. (Robert) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, deathsideblackout@yahoo.com, maddbeat.bandcamp.com)

MAC BLACKOUT BAND – *City Lights* – Super fun tape—he's like a fucking punk MEATLOAF! It's not claiming to be a concept record but it definitely tells a coming-of-age story about someone moving to the city and struggling to adapt, then meeting punks and learning where he fits. The last song "Punks In Pleather" calls out fake poseur punks and is dead on. Really theatrical wailing guitars and prominent synth-driven new wave, but gruff and lo-fi like JAY REATARD. This guy is a total showman and his theatrical stage show perfectly translates onto tape. (Michael) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, facebook.com/macblackout, macblackout.bandcamp.com)

MASTER ZERO – *Bus No A/C* – High energy garage punk with an ear toward *Nuggets* and '60s rock'n'roll. Superb songcraft, and "Long Long Night" effortlessly masters the driving jams. (Robert) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, drugparty.org)

MISERABLE FRIEND – *Thawed, Flawed + Suffering* – Airy pop tunes so steeped in effects and sounds that it's sometimes hard to discern what you are actually listening to. Simultaneously dreary and hopeful, this Wisconsin outfit has poured a fresh approach into the stagnant pool of manufactured shoegaze while maintaining a solid lifeline to the legacies of the trailblazers. You can hear SONIC YOUTH and JESUS AND MARY CHAIN, and Kevin Shields' influence borders on blatant, but MISERABLE FRIEND are taking things into their own hands with intriguing success. This is their second full-length offering. Hopefully these things will find their way to wax eventually and can graduate from the Demos section… (Robert) (9-song cassette, lyrics not included, miserablefriend.bandcamp.com, miserablefriend@gmail.com)

MODERN PETS – *Shock By Shock* – A long-running band from Berlin, they sent a note saying that this is a compilation of eleven songs from throughout the years that the band members handpicked. It's very consistent garage punk that moves from fast to faster where the drums completely fill out the sound and don't allow any aspect to slow down. They're effortlessly consistent and smooth at an unwaveringly steady accelerated pace. This is a great tape to put on and let it ride out. (Michael) (11-song cassette, lyrics not included, modernpets1.bandcamp.com)

MUTANT ITCH – This band is a reason to go to Fresno. If they ask you to play a show, I highly suggest doing it. You won't find a better group of people to make a noisy bullshit racket with. This is their second tape and the sound quality is roughly 1000% better than the first. Don't get me wrong, I loved the original demo and its total fuzzed-to-Armageddon tone, but having seen MUTANT ITCH countless times this tape captures them so well that it just has to be taken as an improvement. Perfect pogo bass and drums, with piercing guitar feedback and washes of wah-hiss while Gurpaul plays feral maniac/barking dog. I realize that probably is not too appealing to a lot of people, but so it goes. MUTANT ITCH are the best. (Shit) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, darkraidslabel@gmail.com)

NAPALM RAID – *Mindless Nation* – Cassette version of this Canadian D-beat, crust-core powerhouse's 2012 LP with bonus covers of BATHORY's "In Conspiracy with Satan," and ANTI-CIMEX's "When the Innocent Die." (Justin) (10-track cassette, lyrics not included, runstate-tapes.com)

NEW BERLIN – This comes off as a kind of solo project, remaining within the confines of minimal lo-fi punk. There's an overall dissonance to the whole thing, mainly due to the vocals always being low in the mix. Every song is produced quite differently, which seems to be intentional, and gives it an interesting and unpredictable quality. There are hooks, and the songs are well written, though not in any groundbreaking way. The RAMONES and LEONARD COHEN covers are unnecessary, but provide some context of influences, I guess. "Fan Boy" is a standout track in a *Killed By Death* comp kind of way. Neat stuff from the deep south of Texas. (Matt) (8-song cassette, lyrics included, newberlin.bandcamp.com, newberlin881@gmail.com)

NEW YORK TAPS – I feel like I'm listening to something that has actually come from the past. Like late '70s, no-fucks-given, drug addled rock'n'roll played with so much energy that it becomes punk almost by accident…and then the dark acoustic number closes the first side and I'm flipping this shit to hear more! More burners, more rock'n'roll, thank you, and "California" is the banger of the month, total (inadvertent?) *Black Dots* outtake. Fans of PAGANS/DOLLS et al will be enthused, fans of punk will want to take notice…and take notes. (Robert) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, 460 Decatur St, Brooklyn, NY 11233, newyorktaps@gmail.com)

NO PEACE – Yesssssssss! Gut churning, fist flailing mania with the most over the top Japcore growls you've heard since you-know-who. Plodding UK82 pogo beats clash in fine fashion with rampaging (and, at times, *almost* rock'n'roll) mid-tempo burners, and the recording is just ridiculously (and accidentally, I'm guessing) perfect. Drums are muddy and buried, bass is hollow and unnecessarily overpowering and the buzzsaw guitar is distorted into a tinny buzzsaw that has no power whatsoever… AND IT IS ABSOLUTELY PERFECT, DO YOU HEAR ME?! And those vocals…listen to the gruff snarl during the breaks in their eponymous song and you will start to break shit. 100% banger status, this rules. (Robert) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, and, sadly, no contact information)

PARTY ANIMAL – *Avant Garbage* – The cover of this is an image of Calvin pissing…wait for it… into a urinal. The music on this is not bad. They play above-average, tight and raging hardcore, but the vocals kill it for me. At best, they're blasé and feel forced. A lot of the words are straight-up cringe-worthy. I guess if you just wanna hang out, party and listen to dudes sing about being dads and shredding, this is for you. (Greg) (11-song cassette, lyrics included, partyanimal.bandcamp.com)

POLICE DES MOERS – *Punk* – This cassette features dark synth punk covers of punk tracks from this self-proclaimed, "crust wave" unit. Track list includes a hauntingly killer version of REAGAN YOUTH's "New Aryans" (that reminds of one of my personal favorite synth tracks by SS-SAY) as well as CHRON-GEN, HEADCOATEES, TROTSKIDS, ANTISECT, ANTI-CIMEX, RUDIMENTARY PENI, and LUDWIG VON 88 covers. Interesting listen. (Justin) (8-song cassette, lyrics not included, runstate-tapes.com)

PYRE – *Human Hecatomb* – Unforgiving old school death metal. Pure brutality and precision, PYRE teeter between early Scandinavia and the low end churn of stench/crust—a truly filthy combination. Fans of death, metal and punishment who want to avoid the bullshit metal attitudes would be advised to check out Reforestation Records, as the level of quality from this Russian label seems to be only getting higher. Bring it on! (Robert) (9-song cassette, lyrics not included, reforestationrecords.bandcamp.com, reforestationrecords@gmail.com)

RATS REST – I don't know how many times I can sing the praises of this band in these pages without repeating myself, but listen up you fucking fools. RATS REST is the shit. I know you're not listening but that's your fucking problem. There're some guitar hooks and vocals that give *Mush*-era LEATHERFACE and NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS a run for their money (I doubt they have money, but it's a phrase people use). Their bass player is the *actual best bass player in the world,* even though I don't like to honor absolutes in that manner. It's straightforward and punk as fuck. They cover a song by UKE OF PHILLIPS. Whatever. You're gonna just keep listening to whatever shit someone on the internet tells you to listen to anyway. I don't care. You lose. Punks win. Fuck it. (Greg) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, Stay Punk Tapes, PO Box 22302, Oakland, CA. 94623, staypunktapes.blogspot.com)

RAZOR SMILEZ – A cover band from Germany, though there are no song credits on the tracklist so you don't know it until you start listening. I was able to identify songs by GRAY MATTER, BIG BOYS, WHITE TRASH, D.I., THE BRIEFS, VIOLADORES, THE FREEZE, THE QUEERS, NO MEANS NO, and HANSON BROTHERS. More fun to make than to listen to, I think. (Matt) (15 song CD-R, lyrics not included, razorsmilez.blogspot.com)

RICECRACKERS – *Kolohe Kid* – Relatively straightforward grunge tracks with powerful and confident female vocals caterwauling over the top of the whole mix. There are a few ska bits, but otherwise this is very commercial sounding retro grunge (one riff per song—"Mall Girls" is basically variations on two chords) aside from the vocals… and those will either make this a winner or a loser depending on your ears. I'm reaching for mainstream comparisons, because that's where my mind travels, but they are just weird enough to elude me…so I guess the vocals win this round. (Robert) (4-song CD-R, lyrics not included, 12 Greylock Rd, Allston, MA 02134, berkleepunx.bandcamp.com)

SEAN GOSPEL – *Good Times With Bad Acid* – He's a founding member of the GOSPELS and this is his first solo thing. It's poppy garage rock calling itself psych hiding under layers of weirdness with a ton of wobbly tremolo on everything. He's trying to make his pop sound unique, but in the same way that everyone else does. It's recorded really lo-fi and loud on purpose so that the whole thing is really distorted, especially the vocals. Another recording trick to mask his simple pop music to sound harsher and different. Pop punk'n'roll, nothing new. Sounds like any one of your friend's solo projects. (Michael) (9-song cassette, lyrics not included, facebook.com/seangospel)

SELF MADE MONSTERS – *Fine Stew* – Opening guitars remind me of BUZZOV•EN, opening vocals remind me of ANTI-SEEN, opening track reminds me of L7, and the whole thing is just a sweaty screaming rock and roll powerhouse. They're at thei best when they are heavy and dark, and more rockin' tracks like "Abyss" kinda get lost in guitar wankery *(worth noting that these kids can wank better than anyone this side of ANNIHILATION TIME, and seem to be equally well versed in The Classics)* while some of the simpler tracks have more impact. I bet they like to get real drunk and real dirty… (Robert) (7-song CD-R, lyrics not included, braindrainrecords.com)

SEXFACE – *Village Life EP* – Somewhere between the LEWD and UK82 / No Future Records lies Montreal's SEXFACE. Maybe the track "Toilet Baby" is leading me to the LEWD comparison but I swear I can hear it in the music too. Rude, crude, punkin' tude on these charged, leather-clad troopers. (Justin) (5-track cassette, lyrics included, runstate-tapes.com)

SMOKERS – Damn straight that this Oakland outfit just out-retroed your candy asses by dropping a *killer* punk tape full of the best songs I've heard since the COMPLICATIONS demo from a decade ago. Equal parts WIPERS and CELIBATE RIFLES and that little *ba-ba-ba-da-ba-ba-da-da* vocal ditty in "Silver Tongue" just proves that they don't give two shits about what you think is cool because they *know* what is cool. SMOKERS swing and SMOKERS groove dirty, and it's all so casually effortless. Power pop mongers will eat this up, greasy rockers will eat this up, and punks worth half a cigarette will inhale deeply. (Robert) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, 231 Oakland Ave, Oakland, CA 94611)

SONIC ORDER – Bombastic hardcore from the UK with gruff blown-out vocals and a street punk savvy approach to ripping noisy mania. I confess that these kids have more success when they rein it in a bit and just pound out the riffs, but there's a certain charm to how wild and messy the shit sounds when they ramp up the energy. "Apathy Breeds" is the creamer for this guy, the song is almost as on point as the lyrics: *"it's easy to be edgy if you've never a victim / it's fun to flirt if you're not a target"*….fukkn perfect. (Robert) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, sonicorder.bandcamp.com, jack.pitt@uea.ac.uk)

SPACE WOLVES – *Space Wolves V* – Another two-piece drum and guitar playing cute jangle garage, basically Michael Cera hipster pop. Each song is fun and clean, sometimes floral but mostly just comfortable and inoffensive. Good boys playing good boy music. (Michael) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, facebook.com/spacewolvesband, morepowertapes.bandcamp.com)

STREET CREATURE – *Electric Eliminator* – This band's first release and it's really well recorded and put together. It's groove metal with a death metal complex. Bottom-of-a-pit screaming 'verbed vocals buried beneath surprisingly riffcentric groovy fuzz guitars, it comes across like a guttural traumatic MOTÖRHEAD. Biker metal that spews from a splattered skull oozing all over the pavement at the scene of the crash. (Michael) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, facebook.com/streetcreatureband, streetcreature.bandcamp.com/releases)

SUSS LAW – New Portland band doing SORE THROAT justice. Everything is spot on here, so I don't even know what to say. Live they're a bloody mess in the right way, with a constant barrage from the drums amid the squeals and screams. I'm excited to have bands playing this style around, especially as it fits into the current landscape of US noise punk. Thankfully SUSS LAW is ex-RADIATION. Keep it coming. (Shit) (9-song cassette, lyrics included, susslawpdx@gmail.com)

UZI RASH – *Banana Leaf Booji Live* – UZI RASH is like the TUPAC of noise punk. They've been dead for years but new stuff keeps surfacing. This new tape comes in the form of a live performance recorded in Costa Mesa, CA. I usually hate live tapes, but this one has a recording quality that sounds better than most bands' demo tapes. It sounds really loose in the best way, letting some intentional (??) "wrong" notes fly free. The vocals always make me think of JAD FAIR and EUGENE CHADBOURNE… maybe even side two of the first CRUCIFUCKS LP. It's "out there." It sounds great. Freak-os apply within. (Greg) (8–song cassette, lyrics not included, pleasantscreams.storeenvy.com)

THE VERMINS – Three song demo of thug thud, dirty alley punk madness featuring Spoiler from OMEGAS. A tad Oi!, a tad late '70s KBD/garage, a tad RAMONES / SPITS, a tad hardcore, all punk. (Justin) (10-track cassette, lyrics not included, runstate-tapes.com)

VANILLA POPPERS – In my opinion, this band's hometown of Cleveland is a bleak ass city and I feel like their sound conveys that. I think it's also important to note that they cover the COMES because the whole tape is doing a good job of laying down that kind of vibe. Raw-as-fuck punk about shit relationships, fucked up drugs and losing your goddamn mind yet again. It rides that line between hardcore and punk that always sounds so perfect. This is the tape you want in your boom box if you live in the only punk house on your street and you spend all day drinking on the porch and throwing empty beer bottles at joggers and cops. (Greg) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, saucepanrecords.bigcartel.com, blowbloodrecords.bandcamp.com)

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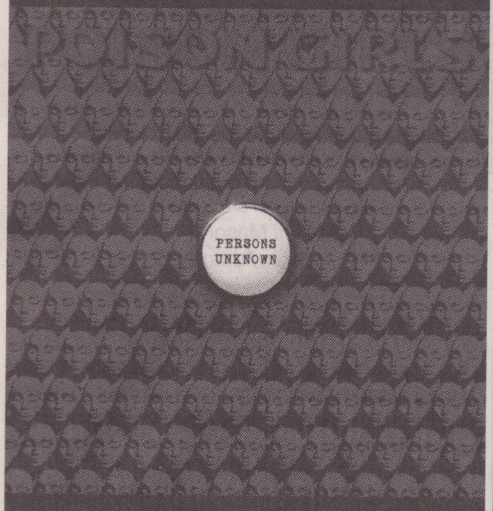
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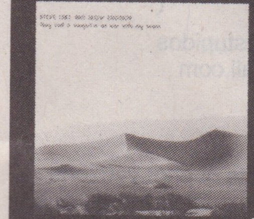

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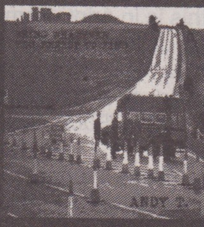

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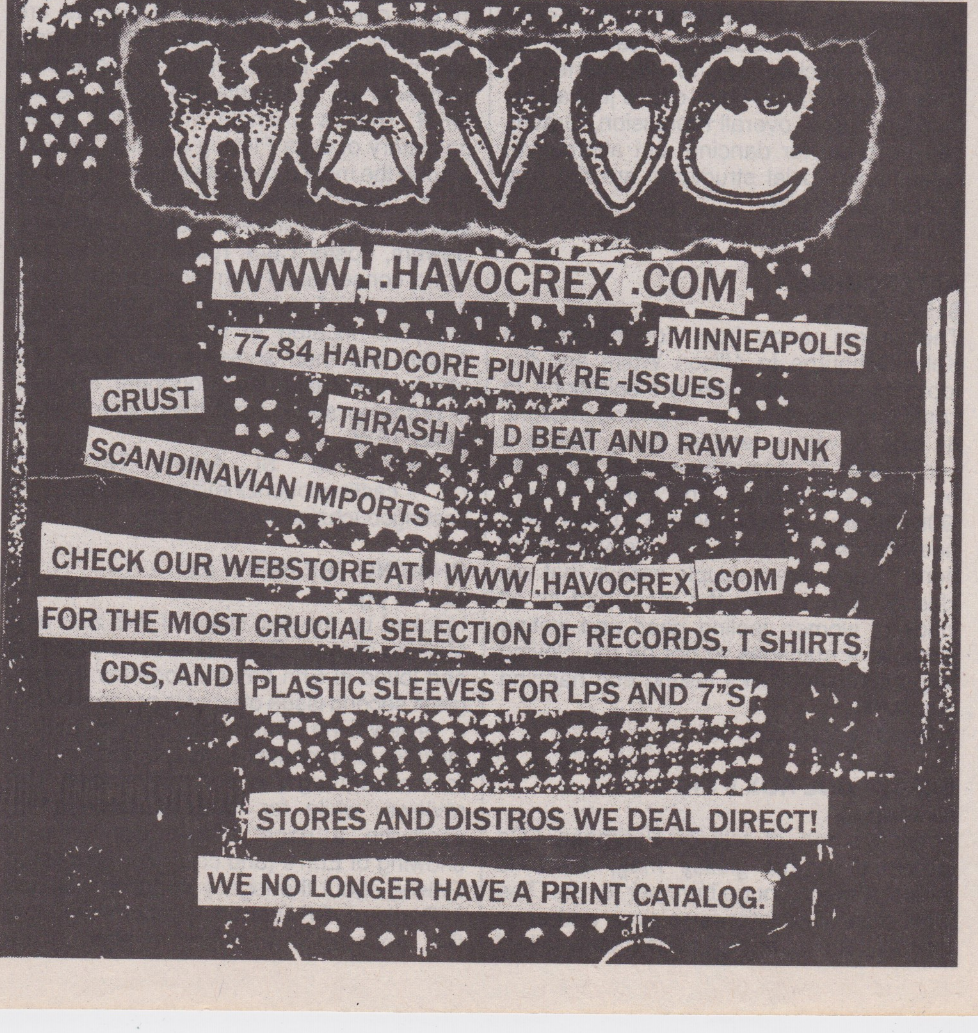

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(EW) Eli Wald
(GA) Grace Ambrose
(JB) Julia Booz
(JD) Justin Davisson
(JM) Jeff Mason
(LA) Lydia Athanasopoulos
(MM) Marissa Magic

ACAB #2 & 3
12 pgs each

These zines will test the depths of your love for dead cop propaganda. Each issue focuses on police killed in the line of duty. A brief, insulting description of the deceased is provided, along with the barest bones of the fatal incident. The perpetrator is identified as "Our Hero," and we learn if jail or death was the cost of their involvement. Issue #2 concentrates on police in Upstate New York, while #3 is a nationwide look at police dogs. The stories are very quick reads, more inspiring (if that's your thing) than informative. I think one or two stories explored in-depth could better illuminate the dynamics and issues around civilian self-defense. I didn't find this simpler and cheaper approach to be of much use. Certainly the harm inflicted on cops by the public is miniscule compared to all the people fucked up and lives ruined by state forces. Still, a dead cop is just a piss in the ocean of overall repression. Graves can be great for dancing, but alternative, sustainable social structures are the real threat to pigs. (JM)
PO Box 467 / Buffalo, NY 14226

AFTERGRRRL
$15 / 40 pgs

The writers range from Lori Barbero to Kelly Osbourne to Allison Wolfe and the topics range from sharing inspirations to coming of age stories to current obsessions all kind of with a feminist bent. This is a compilation of essays by women compiled by Jessicka Addams. The design is very '90s kinderwhore and there is a blank page near the back that says "write your story here!". There are a couple essays that are kind of catty but for the most part its all kinds of women feeling good and writing about it. It manages to not be too cloying or preachy, more like talking and hanging out. (MM)
aftergrrrl.tumblr.com

BLACKPOOL ROX II #10
£2 / 16pgs

There's a ton of talk of European FCs crammed in this glossy mag, which is almost always a huge bummer for me. The most tired band interviews ever, and even their election campaign page mostly talked about football clubs. Go for it, dudes. (DZ)
16 Windmill Close, Blackpool, UNITED KINGDOM FY3 0EB

CASTING COUCH #2
$7 / 32 pgs

A punk mag at its best can make real the ineffable and put it into ink: the tangible thrills of collecting, what it is exactly that makes Golden Pelicans so good, getting Daniel DiMaggio of Home Blitz on the phone. Editor-in-chief Miranda Fisher previously worked on *Rubberneck*; much of the same garage and punk gutter is dredged herein. Expect nothing short of quality: for instance, full-color covers including a photo of DiMaggio that is going up on my wall as soon as I pick up an extra box-cutter. Come to think of it there are a lot of killer pinups in this one—the photos and layouts are beautifully done throughout. There's only one pixelated image, from an advertiser who sent us the same tiny PNG file for *MRR*. There's a whole three-page essay on/history of Girls Pissing on Girls Pissing, among the most provocative New Zealand's bitter cave-dwelling contemporary punk scene. Also featured: Action Swingers, Sewers, Foster Care, record collector and digital conservator Ryan Richardson, Video, an all-too-brief reviews section, pretty much everyone located in or passing through Austin and then some. A very cool and utterly vital music zine throughout. Issue #3 is dropping soon, send them your money today. (EW)
2402B E 13th St, Austin, TX 78702 / castingcouchzine@gmail.com / castingcouchzine.storenvy.com

CHASING THE NIGHT #2
$2 / 68 pgs

I picked up the first issue of this zine at a Mülltüte show in Oakland about a year ago and loved it! Erin has put together a really great second issue of what is predominately a review zine. Submissions from friends include commentary on printed media, memories, drug use, and punk shows. The reviews, while far from all lighthearted, sandwich a panel transcription from a showing of Erin's (and co.) movie *Arresting Power*, about the legacy of police violence in Portland, OR. I strongly recommend this film, not just as a history of pigs on the warpath but also as documentation of a deep moving tide of community resistance and resilience in the face of pig terror. This is a great zine to pick up if you need a little kick in the pants. (EC)
PO Box 1113, Portland, OR 97207

CHICOS ESTÚPIDOS #4/5
68 pgs

I wish I knew more Spanish so that I could get more out of this self-described fanzine for teenage atrocity. There's a write-up on Rakta, interviews with Low Vision (ex-Lie and Flash Gordon; remember when 625 was huge?), Dick Lucas, Coke Bust, Nerd Gets The Girl, Atom and His Package (WTF?) and even manga artist Suehiro Maruo, all interspersed with well-drawn comics and extremely well-reproduced photos. That virtually all of the text is either handwritten or uses typewriter fonts adds to the cool layout. (DG)
facebook.com/chicosestupidos / chicosestupidos@gmail.com

GRIMM MEMES
42 pgs

The whole zine consists of print versions of internet memes. I dunno what the purpose of this is in print. Some are mildly funny but most of them really don't work in the zine format. This is sort of like a 21st Century version of Unamerican Activities aka: the late '90s "Fuck Work" sticker company. (JD)
God Bless Generic Projects, P.O. 32824, Kansas City, MO 64171

I DON'T KNOW HOW TO HELP YOU
$5 / 32 pgs

Comp zine chronicling what it is like to live with and support people with chronic depression. Written by seven different people with a wide variety of perspectives. Sprinkled between stories are quotes by Phillip K Dick and Elizabeth Wrutzel, Bright Eyes, Tilly and the Wall and Mates of State lyrics. (AP)
816 N Main St #200, Lansing, KS 66043

LAND OF 1000 DANCES
$5 / 10 pgs

This entire zine is about the history and significance of the '60s East L.A. band Cannibal and the Headhunters and their hit "Land of 1000 Dances." There's lots of background on what happened before Cannibal and the Headhunters took off including some early rock'n'roll history on Hank Ballard, Chris Kenner (who did the original version of the song), and Fats Domino. The stories are interesting, especially when you read the part about how a fellow East L.A. band, the Midniters, were going to record "Land of 1000 Dances" even after Cannibal's version had been played live. And *in the Cannibal and the Headhunters style*. This also covers the history behind the Wilson Pickett version of the song *and* they include "The WWF Wrestlers" (circa: 1985s *The Wrestling Album).* "This will clear a room!" Well, that has yet to happen to me...except when I used to play it on my radio show. This includes research on every known cover of the song, including versions by Ted Nugent, the Rezillos, and the '60s Brazilian group Os Vips. (JD)

Danny c/o Spin Cycle Records, 321 Broadway E, Seattle, WA 98102 / monkeypunks@yahoo.com

NUTS! #17

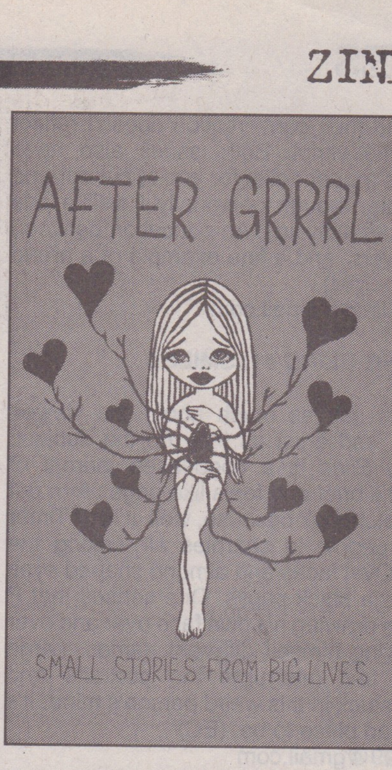
Honestly, I just wanna frame my issues of *NUTS!,* they all look so good! And fuck if the content isn't always great too! Ben gets contributions that are relevant, exciting, and a fine, fresh read. In this issue, with its killer, yellow tinted cover design by Cecilia Caldiera, DX from *Distort* zine ruminates on his recent trip to New York before Total Control tour with tender observations and crude realizations, Mateo Cartagena reviews three of his fave records that he picked up on the Dawn of Humans Eurotour, and Alex Simon talks to Good Throb singer Ellie about their music and lyrics, the answers only highlighting the understated brilliance behind this band. Additionally, Lauren G. from La Misma shares her appreciation for NWI bands, before a brief Q&A with Mark Winter, the punk wunderkind, NWI treasure and main brain behind Ooze, Big Zit, and Coneheads. Sam Ryser contributes an ad for the *NUTS!* shirt he designed, and a trippy poem by Shannen closes the issue off. Just get a sub already! (LA)

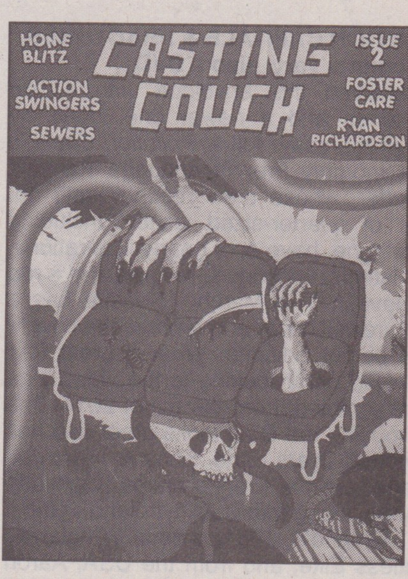
PO Box 1959, New York, NY 10013

ONE WAY TICKET TO CUBESVILLE #17 & 18
40 & 48 pgs

Twice as nice with a double dose of this quality zine. *One Way Ticket To Cubesville* is known for being funny as hell, while still sticking the boot in as needed. The seventeenth issue opens with the greatest puppet theater tale I've ever read, featuring Wat Tyler and Jack Straw. While having a medieval flavor, contemporary issues are brought up, 'cause the fight for workers' autonomy remains. A column on grammar, "Why Apostrophe Hulk Went On A High Street Rampage," is funny enough but contradictory in logic. If language changes via the people's use, then don't get uptight about non-standard punctuation. Even better is the expanded European Court of Justice ruling, I believe reported here for the first time, concerning the "right to be forgotten" of shit bands. The Court first announced this right for the internet, which "is like a fanzine, but unedited and not as good." Now, old reporting on shit bands must be at the bottom of any pile of zines. The crew travels to Barcelona and interviews Accidente, and talks with Steve Ignorant and Pete from Paranoid Visions about their recent collaboration. Alex Ogg, author of a new book on the Dead Kennedys and their first LP, talks about how listening to the band members squabble and hate on each other made his life way worse. Manchester vegan poet Dominic Berry gets a few words in—only one poem though. Recipes feature the shit food, tomatoes. These are nasty, fuck tomatoes. The anarchopunk pub quiz is mostly pretty easy, multiple choice even.

The hits keep coming with #18. The intro looks at the impermanence of the internet and the fucking "cloud," and how the zine is written for a contemporary audience, but also people in the future being turned onto this way of thinking, since someday all the blogs will be lost forever. UK punks Efa Supertramp, Norfolk's anarcho-ska band Faintest Idea, and Manchester's Manifest are interviewed, along with some ancients still kicking around. Efa discusses the Welsh language music scene and how punk bands were too wild to be accepted. Manifest's Bartek speaks on coming up in Poland and getting into hardcore. Delving even further back, there's a look at Ken Colyer, who helped launch the "trad boom" (traditional jazz) in England in the '50s by visiting segregated New Orleans, sitting in with bands, and getting deported back home. He paid the price too, doing a month in Parish Prison—I doubt I'd last two days in a Louisiana jail. The review of the trad jazz movie, 1962's *It's Trad, Dad* is short and sweet, celebrating music's power over state forces. We visit lost Manchester venues to see what railway station or supermarket stands there now. Like so many places, gentrification is smoothing over much of Manchester's downtown cultural life. Both issues have plenty of music and zine reviews, while #18 goes in-depth on Nicky Garratt's North African cookbook, *Mango & Mint.* A piece aimed at future, post-internet readers, looks at punk revivalism, which "provoke[s] conflicts and contradictions which were difficult to resolve." This attitude is specifically indicted for attempts to de-politicize punk, which of course is another name for making room for shitbags, fascists, etc. "'Art for art's sake' is fucking meaningless," he writes, "and definitely not punk...We prefer to burn our fingers on the white-hot heat of creativity, rather than warm our fingers on the dying embers of the past." It says this in the same issue where Poison Idea is interviewed. I don't begrudge Jerry an income, but they've been on the revivalist side for way over twenty years





now, and their conversation doesn't reflect the same vitriol. Both issues also have puppets (paper dolls) for you to cut out and assemble, though personally I dislike arts and crafts activities. An education between four covers, and a fine example of a proud tradition. (JM)
cubesville@hotmail.com

PLAYING BLIND #1: SMILE!!
20 pgs
Portraits say as much about the viewer, voyeur, and artist as they do the subject. *Playing Blind* is a condensed journal of sorts. It's brief and feels like pages torn out of a sketchbook because, well, it is. P Timer draws people in sharpies all looking the same. Oval faces and almond shaped eyes with large black pupils. One senses that P Timer is drawing his own face over and over and giving himself different names. Large blocky text interrupts the portraits and you're stuck in this weird person's mind. It's not a bad place to be. (EC)
ptimer99@gmail.com

POLLUTION CAPITALE & FRACTURES
page counts vary, also a DVD
We received this envelope with a few older zines and a newer one, done by some of the same folks. *Pollution Capitale* was a monthly French-language Parisian newsletter, whose crew recently split up. A pair of quarter-sized issues, including the final one, have cool gnarly illustrations, show listings, interviews, reviews and a rad punk layout. The March '15 issue has a great farewell cover and reprints the covers of the earlier editions. What a great free thing! Also great looking is the video zine they assembled, from the fall of 2014. The zine housing the DVD looks great and has interviews, flyers, and photos. Featured on paper are the French bands Krigskade and Amer, along with Dublin, Ireland's Ghost Trap, Finland's 1981, Leeds, England's Dauntless Elite, and from the USA, Aaron Cometbus discussing the French edition of his *On Tour With Green Day* issue. The video has these bands doing a few songs from shows in Paris over the past couple years, along with Absurdo, Unlogistic, and Ghost Trap. Interviews are shown with the French bands Lobster Killed Me and Abject Object. The band are mostly shot up close, and there's not a lot of the crowd seen. While the styles vary considerably, pretty much every band has good energy. Altogether, a very nice package! Mat from the Pollution crew put together his own thing, *Fractures*. The July 2015 issue is a one-sheet, still with rad punk layout, a photo, and one side is a creepy drawing. The writing, I think, sums up recent happenings in the scene. Cheers to *Pollution Capitale* and please, many more *Fractures*! Contact Mat to see what's still available.
orangejuice@riseup.net

SIMPLE STEPS TO A LIFE LESS SHITTY
$6 / 34 pgs
In a way I feel weird trashing this because it's just some guy dispensing tips on how to beat depression which theoretically I dig and I understand how it's a worthy cause but holy shit this comes off as a ball of preachy narcissistic humble bragging. This was a fucking eye roll front to back. A fucking copyright message at the beginning? A list of recent releases? A bio blurb on the back page with a cool dude hanging out publicity photo? Press quotes on the back? If this somehow helps someone out of a dark space then good, I think that's great, but to me it's just a name-dropping pile of pretentious sleaze slime. (MM)
pioneerspress.com

SLINGSHOT #119
free / 16 pgs
The Slingshot collective has been putting out this stellar publication since the '80s, and you need to pick up a copy immediately. A purely political zine, with only a slight focus on Bay Area issues, plus articles about how immigrants are treated (and not just in North America), bullshit pharmaceutical news, anarchist book reviews, a list of cop-watching apps and a fuck-ton more. (DZ)
P.O. Box 3051, Berkeley, CA 94703 / slingshot.tao.ca

SOFA KING #4
58 pgs
This is a Hungarian hardcore zine [*Ed. Note: by Viktor Vargyai, of this magazine!*] and since it's purely text I thought I would go through and translate a line here and there. The stuff I did translate was pretty funny even though, you know, things get lost and jumbled. The title at the beginning said "Hardcore is a music genre and that's not necessarily a bad thing." A review of the year in rock'n'roll that ends with "Punk is dead, it doesn't need food." There was a lengthy section of band reviews in which the Gun Outfit review just said "I think I wrote about them already" and also that the Urinals sound like the Ramones. There is a lengthy article about *True Detective*, a section that appears to be show reviews, a review of punk from different countries, maybe something about Ian Mackaye? There's a "News" section that seems to be a series of one-liners, including "The McRib is better than the first Skrewdriver record." Seems weird and cool, though not speaking Hungarian makes it a little laborious for me to read. (MM)
lets-have-a-war.blogspot.com

SPARE CHANGE #32
$2 / 40 pgs
If you've ever met the good Reverend Foote, you've almost certainly immediately heard of his love for the USPS. In this issue he reprints his postage paid remarks (insert cha-ching sound for the USPS here!) to a shit-selling mail order company called the Bradford Exchange. Although this isn't Tom's finest work, there are more than a few totally legit guffaws throughout, and the large love letters he sent semi-anonymously via international air mail (does this bring revenue to both countries' postal services?) are not only hilarious, but totally fucking sweet, to boot. Always pick up *Spare Change* when you see it. (DZ)
P.O. Box 6023, Chattanooga, TN 37401

TOINEN VAIHOEHTO #255
32 pgs
The awards for longest words and cleanest photo reproduction go to this Finnish standby. Much of it is given over to reviews, including a few pages on Puntala-Rock 2015, which drew Una Bèstia Incontrolable and Mustang, along with numerous locals. Lapinpolthajat are interviewed, and the Umeå (Sweden) scene is reported on; a sweet mural is reproduced. The shorter write-up of the Escapist/Litovsk tour—just a few shows—lacks live photos, but is there is a nice shot of the whole crew. *Toinen Vaihoehto* always looks great, go Finland! (JM)
PL 25 / 37501 Lempäälä / Finland / punkinfinland.net/tv

THE TROUBLE WITH NORMAL #135
$5 / 42 pgs
This issue marks this zine's 23rd year of existence. It's mostly comprised of show reviews centering around the Diva Haus (RIP), some record reviews and an interview with the band War on Women. (AP)
PO Box 1444, Columbia, MO 65205 / ttwn@hotmail.com

THE VEGAN'S GUIDE TO PEOPLE ARGUING WITH VEGANS
35 pgs
It's 2015, shit continues to be fucked up around the world, and intersectionality matters. I don't have time for white teenage-level vegan politics that get about as sophisticated as "my family doesn't understand me" and plays Spot The Hypocrisies *Mad Libs* among the types of (real or imagined) people the author argues with, especially without any real cultural or socioeconomic analysis. I get that that the first edition of this zine was published twenty years ago, back when you could say the words "Earth Crisis" and not be telling a joke, but honestly, I can't even tell what the revisions are (other than the intro stating that the food options are better), because somehow the politics have stood still for two decades. I've been vegan for almost fifteen years, but this kind of shit makes me want to eat foie gras out of spite. (DG)
cubesville@hotmail.com

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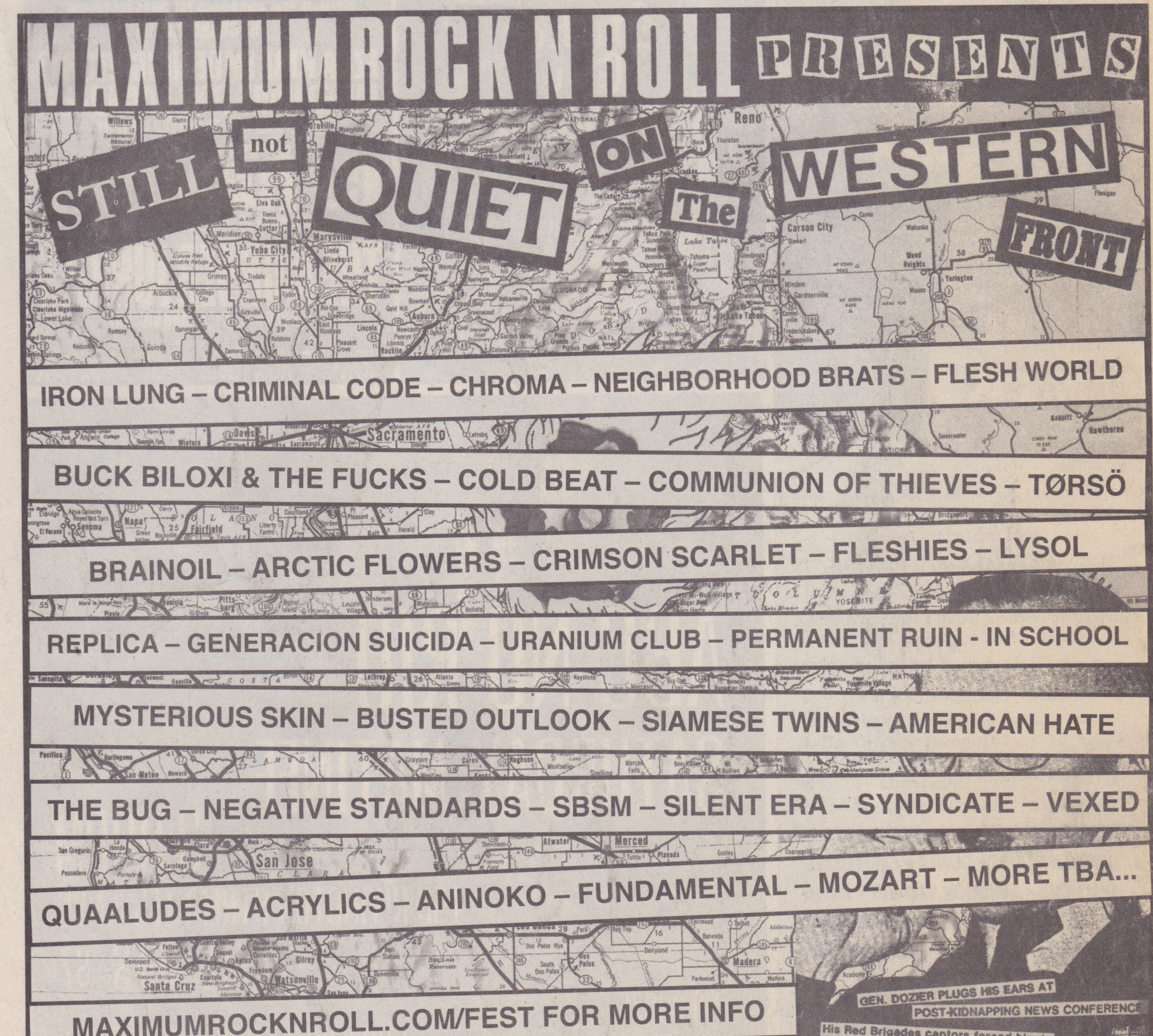

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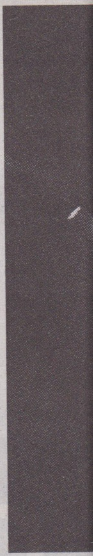

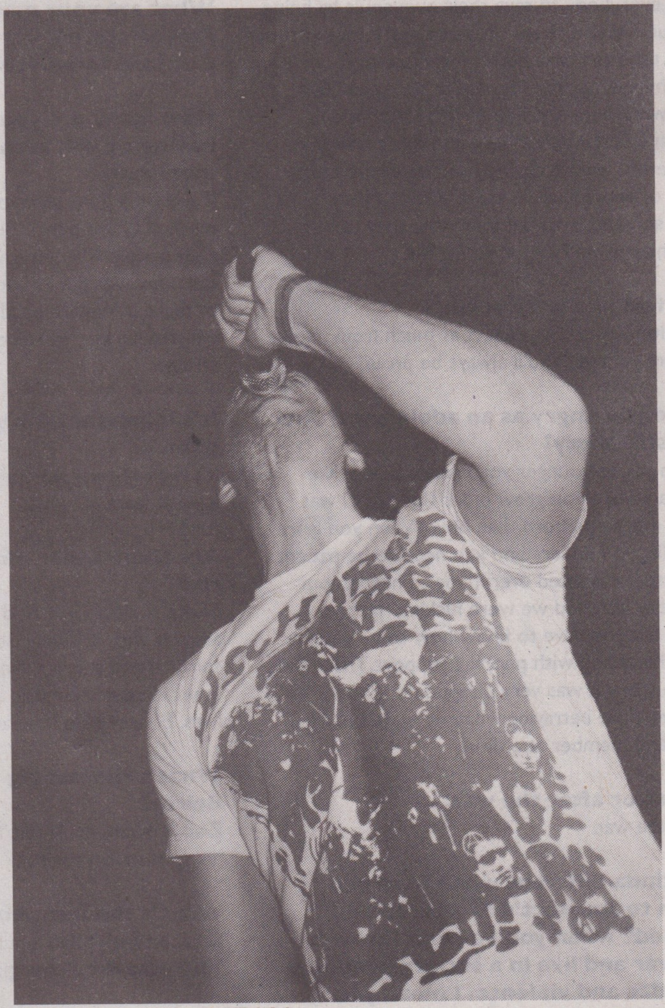

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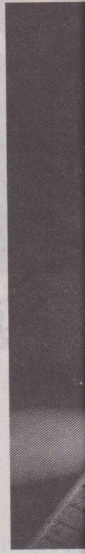

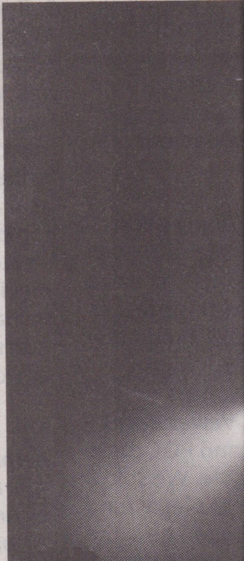FRAU